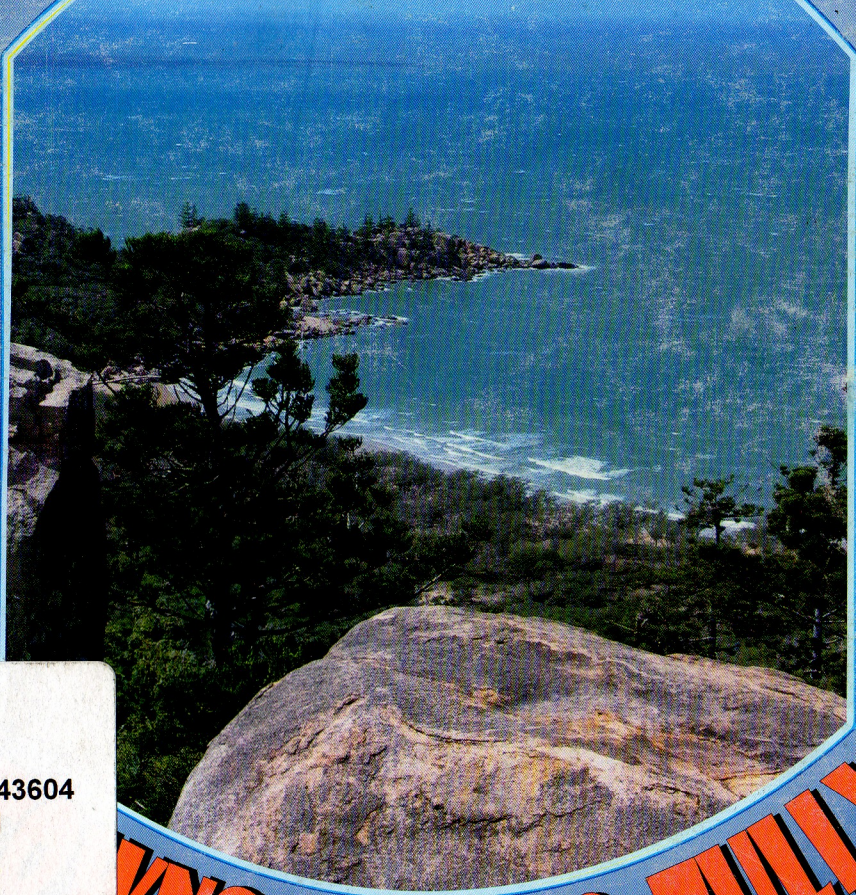


TROPICAL WALKING TRACKS



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WYNNSVILLE TO TULLY

Kym Dungey & Jane Whytlaw

Published by Footloose Publications
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INTRODUCTION

Townsville lies at the southern extent of the wet tropics region, where it rains during the summer wet season but is generally dry for the rest of the year. The lowland vegetation in the area is mostly open eucalypt forest populated with bloodwoods, poplar gum, ironbark and Moreton Bay ash, while kapok trees, hoop pine and grass trees cling to the rocky hill slopes. Any rainforest is confined to the higher slopes of Mt Elliot and the Paluma Range, but this changes noticeably the further north you travel. Near Tully, the wettest region in Australia, the vegetation changes to lush rainforest. Consequently the region between Townsville and Tully offers a wide variety of walking experiences that are subject to dramatic climatic extremes.

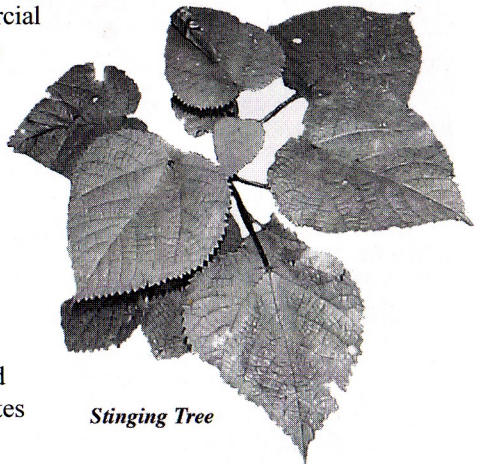
This book has walks that range from short walks to the iconic multi day Thorsborne Trail on Hinchinbrook Island. They pass through flat open country, scale steep rainforest clad mountains, meander along creek banks to magnificent waterfalls, scale boulder strewn hills or climb through rainforest to eyries with impressive views. The long walks pass through diverse habitats, ranging from coastal mangroves and eucalypt forest to riparian corridors and damp rainforest clad peaks and valleys.

A few paved paths have wheelchair access, but the majority are unsealed, and some are rough trails. Each walk description has a rating that gives an indication of the conditions you may encounter. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency and most information centres can provide additional information.

Some of the walks start in the middle of nowhere and end in the back of beyond, causing logistical problems. This makes it difficult to get back to your starting point without pre-arranging transport between the entrance and exit points. We have addressed this problem by suggesting alternative shorter return walks.

Most walks have historical origins. They follow Aboriginal trails that were later utilised by explorers and pioneers. The WW2 gun emplacements on Magnetic Island and Cape Pallarenda and the stone bridges at Little Crystal Creek and Dalrymple are notable man-made landmarks. Tin mining and logging industries impacted on the local environment until commercial activity in state forests ceased with the declaration of the World Heritage Area. This infrastructure, particularly the roads to remote locations, has enabled people to penetrate and explore otherwise inaccessible terrain.

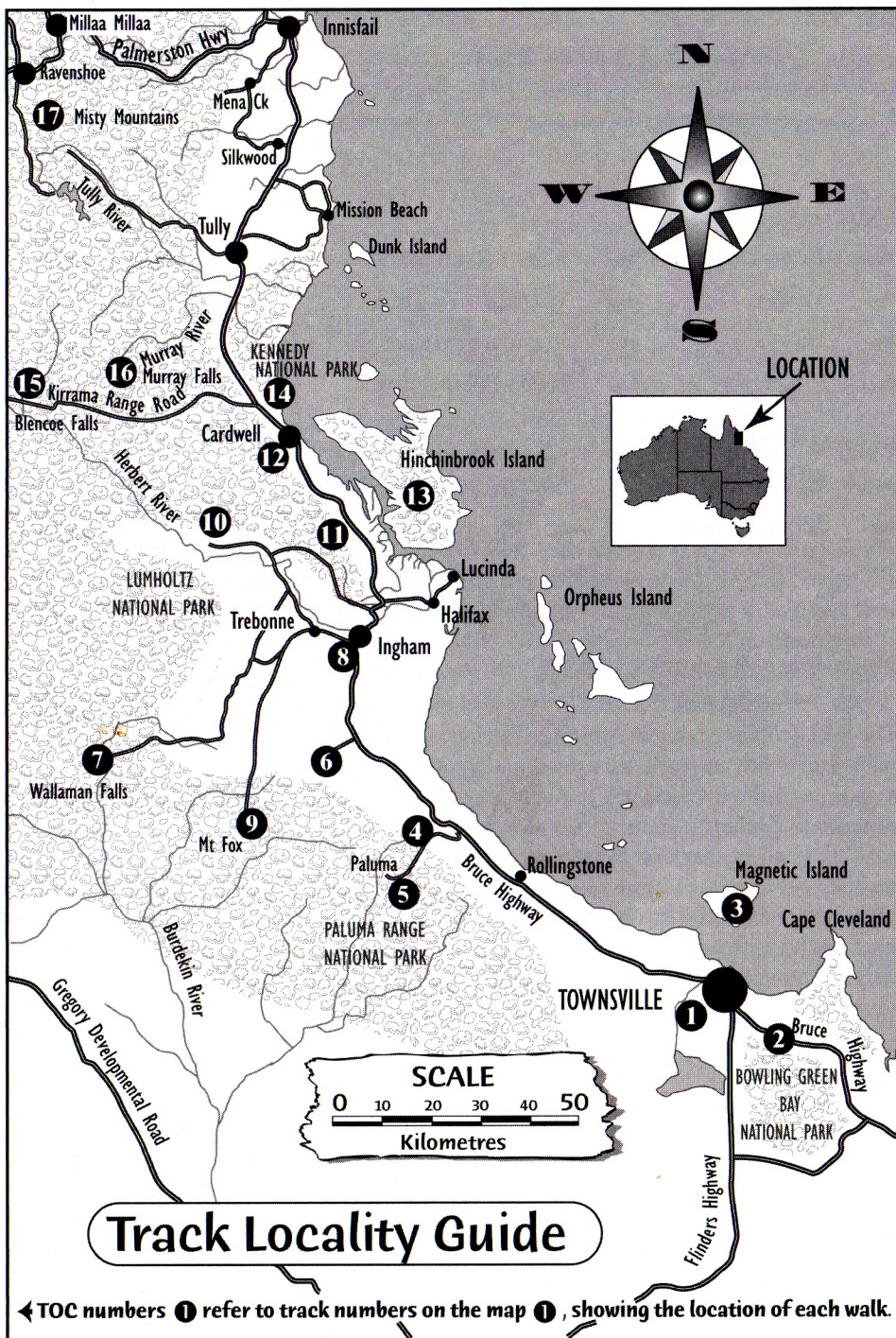
Our intention is to provide a small book that can be easily carried on a walk, so the information has been condensed to include the most important facts about each walk. For additional information about the geology and flora and fauna of the region, check the websites mentioned in the book.



Stinging Tree

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DAY TRIP CHECK LIST

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service can be contacted during business hours for track conditions, permits and information. Permits are required for camping, commercial activities and group activities in national parks and other protected areas.

ESSENTIAL ITEMS

 BACK PACK	 INSECT REPELLENT	 PLASTIC PONCHO
 WATER	 WALKING TRACK GUIDE	 WATCH
 HAT	 STURDY WALKING SHOES	 POCKET KNIFE
 SUNBLOCK	 BASIC FIRST AID KIT	 ENERGY SNACKS

RECOMMENDED ITEMS


 BINOCULARS	 FLAGGING TAPE	 TORCH
 MOBILE PHONE	 SUNGLASSES	 CAMERA
 COMPASS	 MATCHES OR LIGHTER	 AREA MAP

PREPARATION & PRECAUTIONS

When planning a walk, make allowances for the volatile nature of the tropics. The Wet Tropics region is subject to cyclones, which often cause forest debris to block paths and obliterate track markers. Walking conditions can become intolerable in the wet season, and flooded streams and slippery conditions can make a normally safe walk dangerous. Walking in the tropics involves dealing with irritating insects such as mosquitos, sand flies and leeches. Some vegetation can cause considerable pain, particularly the long barbed tendrils of the wait-a-while palm that dangle across rainforest paths. Stinging trees grow where the forest has been disturbed. The leaves and stems are covered in fine hair-like needles containing toxin that inflicts a sting that can last for weeks (photo p3). It's not uncommon to see cassowary in the wild. These large confident birds usually show little interest in people, but can become aggressive if confronted, so back off slowly and wait for the bird to move on. Crocodiles are a fact of life in coastal waterways. There's not much future in getting eaten unless you're keen on being an interesting statistic, so stay out of the water in areas identified as crocodile habitats. From October to May coastal waters harbour marine stingers, jellyfish whose venom is agonizing and sometimes fatal. Heed stinger warnings; even stinger enclosures are not completely safe. Always carry at least 2 litres of water on a long walk and don't attempt any strenuous walks unless you are an experienced bushwalker. If you feel uncertain about your position, don't go any further; backtrack to your starting point. And finally, always notify friends or relatives of your plans, then someone will know where to start looking if you don't return.

TOWNSVILLE

It was difficult to decide how many Townsville city walks should be included in this book. The city has kilometres of paths that double as bicycle tracks, and kilometres of dedicated walking paths. We have listed the urban walks and suggest you visit the information centres for detailed leaflets and maps of the city and suburbs.

The Strand , Townsville's recently refurbished foreshore park, has a 2.2km walking path and fitness areas, playgrounds, a rock pool, swimming enclosures, restaurants and cafes. It is an entertaining place at any time of day. Ask for the *Strand Navigator* map at information centres. The Strand is wheelchair accessible.

Anderson Park Botanical Gardens on Gulliver Street (open daylight hours from Tuesdays to Fridays) is a large botanic complex with a network of paths. The Gardens are wheelchair accessible.

The Ross River curls through Townsville from Ross Dam behind Mount Stuart, carving a leafy trail through the suburbs. Information centres have an A4 brochure, *Walks by Ross River*, describing the extensive riverside walking paths, dividing them into eight sectors of approximately one-hour duration.

Mount Stuart towers above James Cook University and the Laverton Army Complex on the western perimeter of Townsville. Drive 5km along the Flinders Highway toward Charters Towers from the Bruce Highway/Flinders Highway intersection and turn onto the 9km road to Mount Stuart summit. At the summit a 600m circuit path circumnavigates a group of transmission towers, linking a series of lookouts that overlook a 360-degree panorama. The humming towers are impressive - I couldn't help wondering if the maintenance staff glow in the dark.

Beaches are unofficial walking tracks. Subject to the vagaries of the tide, they offer such an interesting mix of weather-worn flotsam and mariners' jetsam that it is possible to walk many kilometres, spurred on by the next mysterious lump a little further up the beach. The beaches from **Rowes Bay** to **Cape Pallarenda** in Townsville, and **Saunders Beach** and **Balgol Beach** to the north all offer a suitable walking surface at low tide.

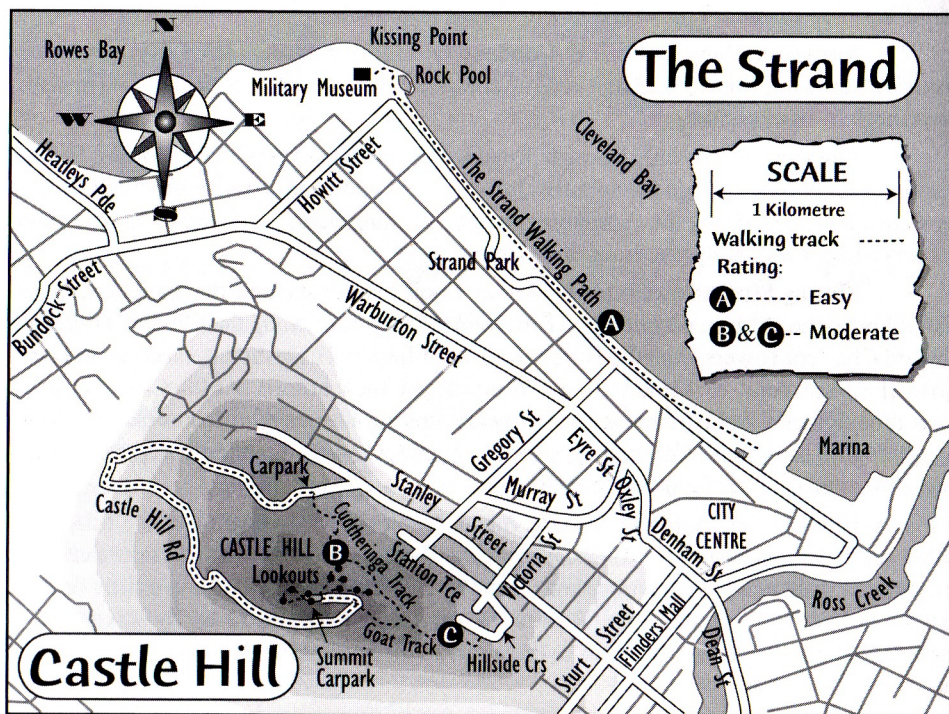
Bluewater and **Rollingstone** are very popular freshwater creek campsites near the Bruce Highway, north of Townsville. They have no specific walking trails, but you can do mini-bushwalks and wander down to the creek. Both rest areas have barbecues and amenities, but Rollingstone has the added attraction of a Railway Museum and a pub.

CASTLE HILL - 1 HOUR

Townsville's most significant landmark, Castle Hill, towers 300m above the city centre. The paths that climb to the top of this imposing granite monolith offer a convenient physical challenge to those who want a good workout. To get to the hill, follow the stripped down map provided - there are signs along the way.

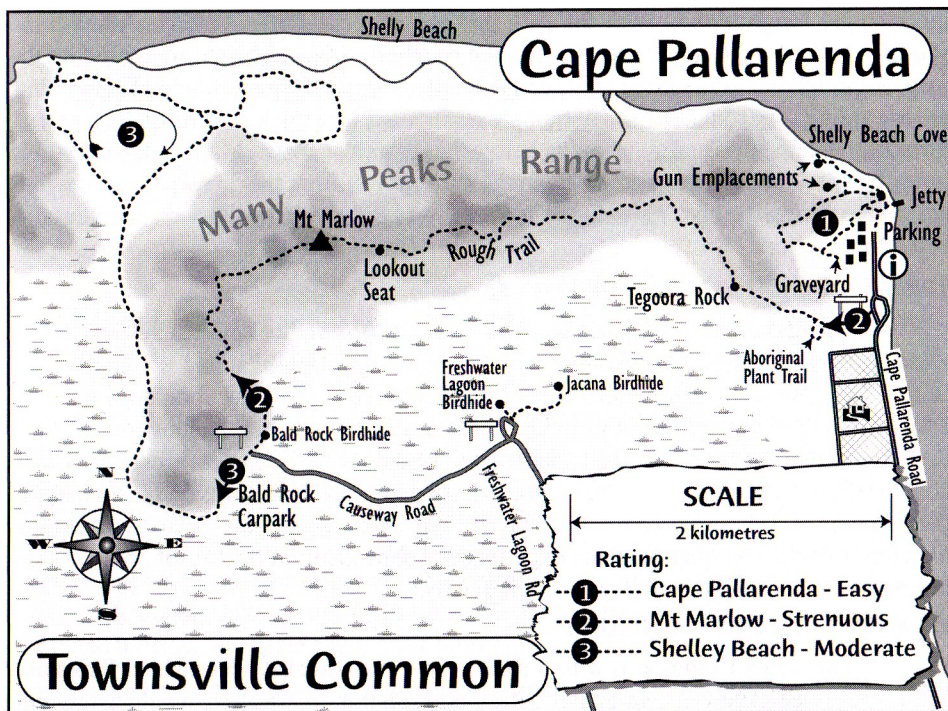
Every morning and evening the 2.9km road winding up Castle Hill becomes a pedestrian obstacle course, as locals and visitors stride to the top for their daily exercise. The carpark at the base of the hill on Castle Hill Road is a convenient place to start the

walk, whether you walk the road or follow the walking tracks. The carpark is opposite the start of the Cudtheringa Track **B**, which winds around the base of the rock and links to the Goat Track **C**, which connects the summit to Hillside Crescent. From the junction the Goat Track climbs steeply to connect with Castle Hill Road, just before the carpark on the summit. It takes about 20 minutes to climb to the top along either of these dirt tracks. The walk can be completed as a circuit by returning to the bottom via the road. On the summit there are short paths to numerous lookouts that offer magnificent views of the city, surrounding mountains and islands.



CAPE PALLARENDA - 1 HOUR **1**

Cape Pallarenda Conservation Park is situated at the end of Cape Pallarenda Road, a continuation of Heatley's Parade, which starts at the T-junction with Bundock and Warburton Streets below Castle Hill (see city map above). At the park there are picnic tables and barbeques in parkland adjoining the beach. A museum display of Pallarenda's historical mementos and an information centre recount the history of the area. Cape Pallarenda is a historical artefact of Townsville's chequered past. It was established in 1915, when the quarantine station on Magnetic Island was relocated to Cape Pallarenda. The site was later used as a WW2 hospital and defence site and more recently, as the headquarters for the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS). The complex is currently occupied by the Environmental Protection Agency. A series of short paths that



radiate from a 2km circuit path explore gun emplacements, searchlight sites, a graveyard, a dam and a fortified cove. In all there are 3.6km of well-defined gravel paths, and although the track only rises to an altitude of 85m, the higher reaches have extensive views. The circuit is signed. These easy walks will gain greater significance if you visit the museum and information centre first.

MANY PEAKS RANGE - 3 HOURS ②

The 6.9km Many Peaks Range walk has two trailheads. The western trailhead is 7km from Bundock Street at the end of Causeway Road at the Bald Rock carpark in the Townsville Town Common Conservation Park. It is accessed via Freshwater Lagoon Road from Cape Pallarenda Road at a signed junction 2.8km from Bundock Street. The eastern trailhead is on Cape Pallarenda Road, 6.2km from Bundock Street.

The trail has three distinct sections, and can be tackled as two moderately short walks that do not connect, or undertaken as a single walk. From each trailhead, the shorter trails are well defined. They both lead to lookout points, Tegoora Rock from the east, and the summit of Mount Marlow from the west. The return walk to Tegoora rock is an easy 2.4km stroll, including a 200m Aboriginal Plant Trail that diverts from a vehicle track 300m from the trailhead. The 5.2km return walk from the western trailhead to Mount Marlow is steeper and more strenuous

The central 3.3km section that connects Tegoora Rock and Mount Marlow is more difficult. The trail climbs steadily from Tegoora Rock toward Mount Marlow through

increasingly rough terrain, until the path becomes a rock hopping exercise around the southern face of the Many Peaks Range. The roughest 900m section is identified on the map. Although this slows progress, the trail is interesting and the multitude of viewpoints are rewarding. The rough section of trail passes through vine thicket for most of its extent, breaking out into grassland about 500m before the summit of Mount Marlow. It is advisable to walk early in the morning when the range shelters you from the direct sun, an obvious advantage during the hotter months. Whichever way you walk the Many Peaks Range, it is worth the effort.

SHELLEY BEACH - 3 HOURS RETURN ③

At the Bald Rock carpark, you will see a signpost to Shelley Beach. This 8.5km return walk is intended for bird watchers. It follows an old road along the edge of the Bohle River Basin to the western end of Shelley Beach. The road forks at a junction 2.8km from the carpark to form a circuit. It is about 1km to the beach along the left fork. From the end of the beach the road parallels the fore-dune to the eastern end of the beach and the Many Peaks Range, where it curves around the base of the hills and reconnects at the junction. A 130m interconnecting track 5.2km from the carpark bypasses 2.2km of the circuit track. The quality of the experience is dependent on the season, but you can expect to see a lot of birdlife if you take it quietly.

TOWNSVILLE TOWN COMMON

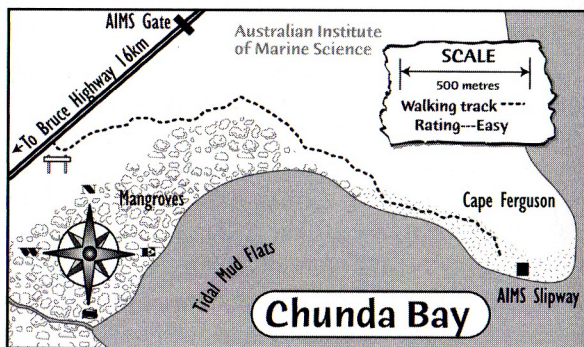
The Town Common is a bird sanctuary extraordinaire. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service have a vast amount of information on this area, and we would be wasting space by repeating it. There are three short walks and two viewing points along Freshwater Lagoon Road. Two short paths lead to the Jacana bird-hide and the Freshwater Lagoon bird-hide, and the Forest Walk is a 1.9km circuit through open bushland alongside a billabong and the golf course. The park is open from 6.30am to 6.30pm daily.

BOWLING GREEN BAY NATIONAL PARK

CHUNDA BAY - 1 HOUR RETURN

The turnoff to Cape Cleveland and Chunda Bay is 37km south of Townsville. The road ends at AIMS, 16km from the Bruce Highway. A sign indicates the start of Chunda Bay walk, 700m back from the entrance to AIMS.

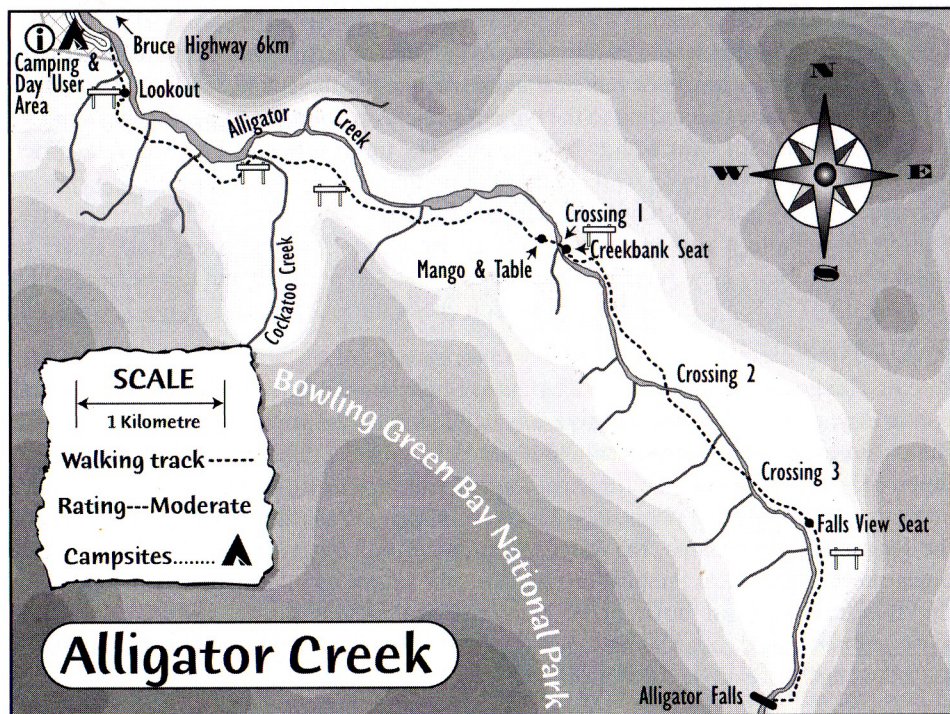
The walk follows a dirt vehicle track for about 1km through coastal bushland to the western end of the beach behind a strip of mangroves that adjoin a tidal creek and mudflats. It is an easy 900m rock hop across coarse granite slabs and patches of sand from the mangroves to Cape Ferguson.



ALLIGATOR CREEK - 5 HOURS RETURN

Bowling Green Bay National Park is an area of diverse habitats, from the forests on Mt Elliot to coastal wetlands and mangroves. The turnoff from the Bruce Highway to Alligator Creek is 28km south of Townsville. It is another 6km to the park, which is open from 6:30am to 6:30pm daily. The park beside Alligator Creek has a camping area with 25 sites and amenities and a picnic area with barbecue facilities. A permit to camp can be obtained from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service by phoning 07 4778 8203, or book on the web: www.env.qld.gov.au.

From the southern end of the picnic area a creek bank boardwalk provides access to the first of a string of deep clear swimming holes. The boardwalk has wheelchair access. A lookout 500m from the picnic area overlooks this section of Alligator Creek. The 17km, 5hr return Alligator Falls walk passes this lookout and follows the creek valley through open eucalypt forest. Most of the walk follows a maintenance track that weaves back and forth under high voltage powerlines, crossing three creeks along the way. The valley narrows between Mount Elliot and Saddle Mountain as you approach the waterfall. The final 1.2km section is a rough path that leaves the maintenance track and passes through vine forest to the falls. (The sign that indicates it is 2km to the falls is wrong.) The path emerges from the forest at the base of an immense granite cliff where the falls drop into a series of rock pools that cascade down the creek. This is an easy walk, but the long distance can make it tiring, so it gets a moderate rating.



MAGNETIC ISLAND

THE ISLAND

Magnetic Island lies in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, 8km northeast of Townsville. The island's dramatic geology, sparse vegetation and dry tropical climate are distinctive. Picture-postcard granite hills rise above a succession of idyllic beaches, each cupped within its own protective bay. Clusters of Hoop pine dot boulder-strewn peninsulas, and eucalypt forest and Kapok trees populate the higher terrain. It is extremely photogenic, so don't forget your camera.

The bays are promoted as good swimming beaches. During the stinger season nets are erected at Horseshoe Bay and Picnic Bay. Arcadia locals claim Alma Bay is a safe year-round swimming beach, but it is safer to confirm the stinger status before you swim.

Magnetic Island has been a holiday resort for about a century, but its history has not been all beer and skittles. The rugged coast has seen many shipwrecks. Interested historians can survey wreck sites whilst reading conveniently placed interpretive signs that describe each tragedy.

The walking trails provide access to the islands hinterland and (otherwise) inaccessible bays, and allow walkers to move between the settlements away from the rigours of traffic. First, there are a few points about the logistics of getting there, staying there and getting around.

GETTING THERE

The Magnetic Island Passenger and Car Ferry, which leaves from the Ross Street wharf in Townsville transfers vehicles and passengers to the island, landing at Geoffrey Bay. The price varies according to the type of vehicle and number of people, but starts at about \$130 return for a car with two occupants. The ticket office will give an exact price when you book by phone on 07 4772 5422 or on the web: www.riversidemarine.com.au Advance booking is always advisable, but is essential for peak periods and school holidays. Sunferries operate a passenger-only service from the Flinders Street East wharf to Breakwater at Nelly Bay. A return ticket costs about \$20 per adult and can be booked by phoning 07 4771 3855. For more information check the web: www.sunferries.com.au

GETTING AROUND

Magnetic Island Bus Service runs a regular service between Horseshoe Bay and Picnic Bay, providing an inexpensive way to get around the populated part of the island. Buses run every 40 minutes from about six o'clock in the morning until midnight. Bus times are subject to seasonal change, so get a timetable from the post office or any accommodation office or phone 07 4778 5130. While you are there pick up a free copy of the *Magnetic Island Guide*, the *Magnetic Island World Heritage* pamphlet and the tide times sheet. These local publications are a useful source of information. Timetables for the bus service and both ferry services are in the guide and on the web: www.magnetictimes.com. Car and motorcycle rentals are available from a few outlets on the island and there are taxis. Consult the guide.

STAYING THERE

Magnetic Island has most forms of accommodation, but there are no council camping areas on the island. Caravan parks, backpackers, resorts, cottages, flats and bed & breakfast accommodation are listed in the guides and on the web, but they list only a fraction of what is available.

THE WALKS

All the walks on the island are charming. Some are paved but most are unpaved paths that blend into the rugged landscape. Where the paths climb up between large rocky outcrops flat granite flagstones have been placed to form steps. The northern walks follow roads constructed for the WW2 defence effort. None of the walks are particularly strenuous, but it pays to pick your time of day in the hot season, as sections of track are exposed to direct sun. The road from Picnic Bay to West Point ❶ is listed in the local guide as a 16km 5 hour return walk. This road does not have the charm of the other walks, but West Point is worth a visit for its beach and shipwreck site.

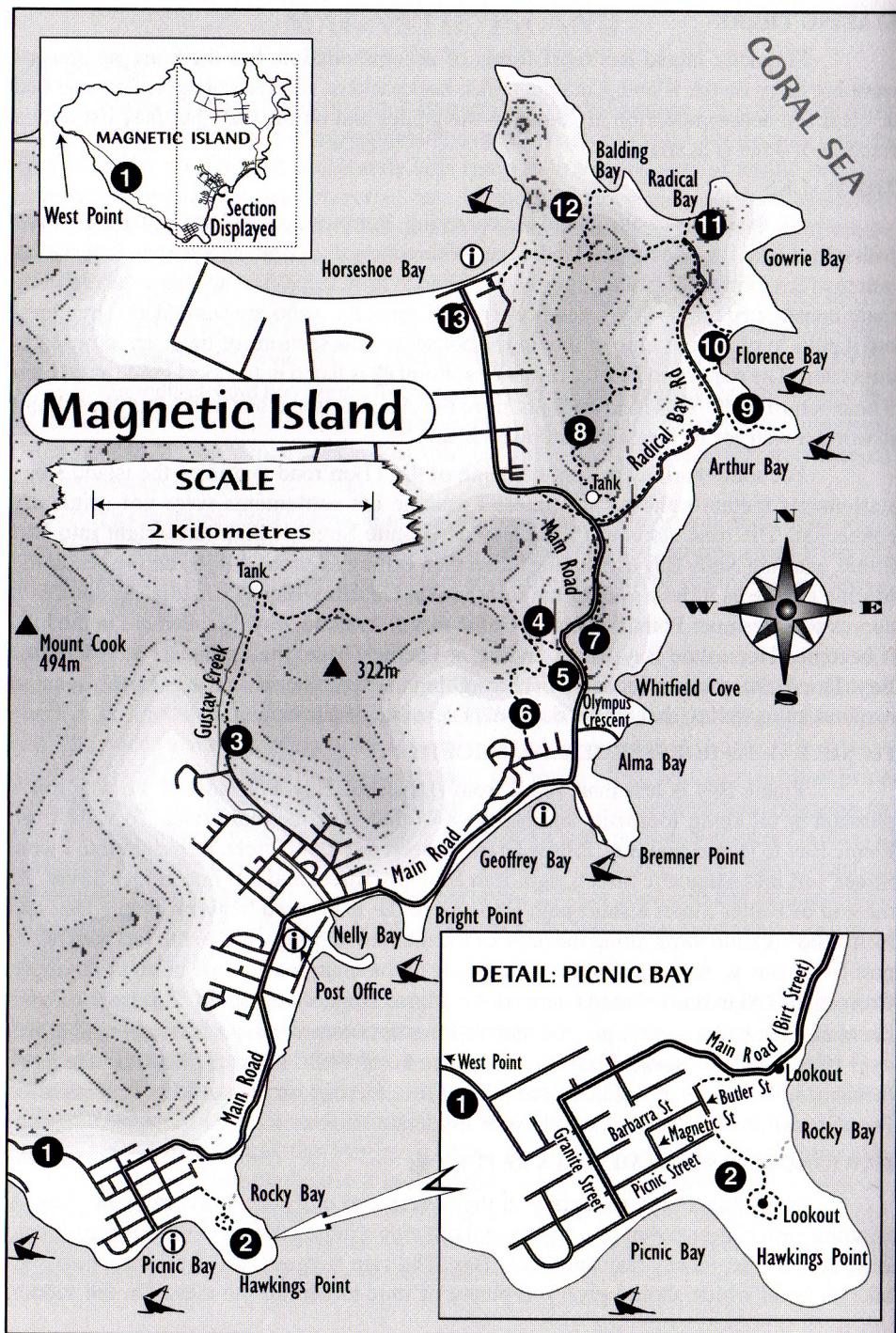
For some curious reason the name of the 11km road that joins the island's bay settlements metamorphoses six times; I assume the settlements were not originally connected. The road starts at Picnic Bay as Granite Street, which turns right into Birt Street, entering Nelly Bay as Sooning Street then exiting as Arcadia Road before becoming Marine Parade as it passes along the foreshore at Geoffrey Bay to Arcadia. As soon as it curves past Bremner Point it adopts a Gallic name, Armand Way. Somewhere in the hills it becomes Horseshoe Bay Road, ending at Pacific Drive, the esplanade at Horseshoe Bay. To avoid confusion (or add to it) I am going to call it the 'main road'. Locals seem to respond quite well to this, and it does seem sensible, if a little bland.

PICNIC BAY TO HORSESHOE BAY - 3 HOURS

Picnic Bay is less than 10km from Horseshoe Bay. For most of the way it is a pleasant stroll along footpaths and boardwalks that skirt the main road. To walk from Picnic Bay to Horseshoe Bay, follow Granite Street to Picnic Street, turn right into Picnic Street, left into Magnetic Street, right into Barbarra Street and left into Butler Street. At the end of Butler Street a short path leads up to the main road between Picnic Bay and Nelly Bay. A short walk along the edge of the main road brings you to the footpath down past Nelly Bay to Arcadia. On the eastern side of the main road a little north of Olympus Crescent, a 1.8km unused road connects Arcadia to Horseshoe Bay ❷. This track crosses the main road 850m further on, and then follows the western side of the main road to bus stop 19, the start of Radical Bay Road and the Forts Walk. From the bus stop the track heads in a north-westerly direction to rejoin the main road on the outskirts of Horseshoe Bay. Overall it is an easy walk with some moderate climbs.

HAWKINGS POINT - 40 MINUTES RETURN ❷

Hawkings Point walk starts at the eastern end of Picnic Street in Picnic Bay. A winding path climbs 600m to a fenced lookout atop a large boulder, with views of Picnic Bay, Townsville, Rocky Bay and Nelly Bay. The sign suggests that the return walk will take an hour, which should give you plenty of time to admire the view. On the saddle,

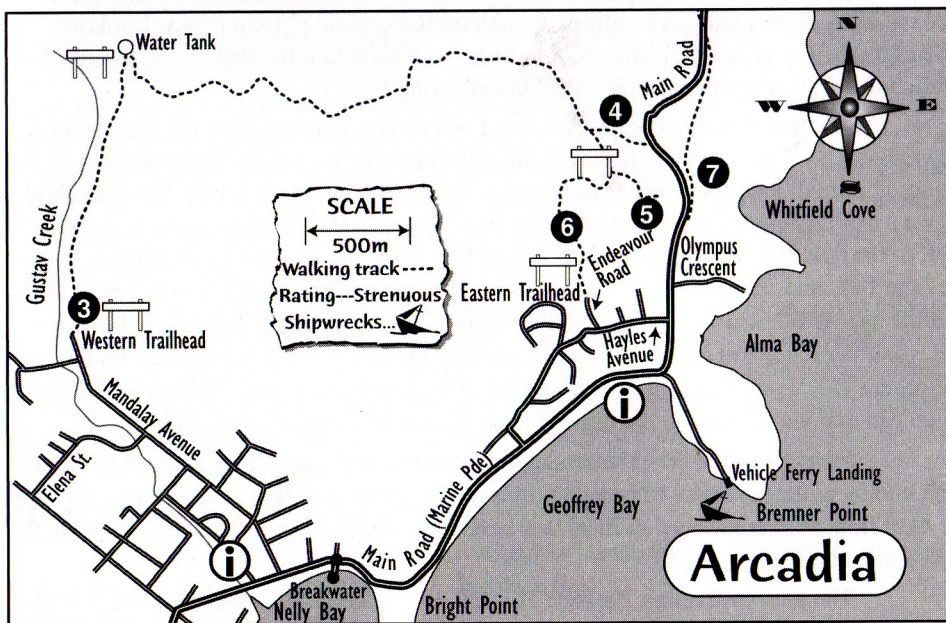


about halfway to the lookout, you may notice the start of a poorly defined rough path. It winds down to Rocky Bay beach. This path is marked on the *Island Guide* map, but not on the *World Heritage* map.

ARCADIA TRACK - 2½ HOURS ③

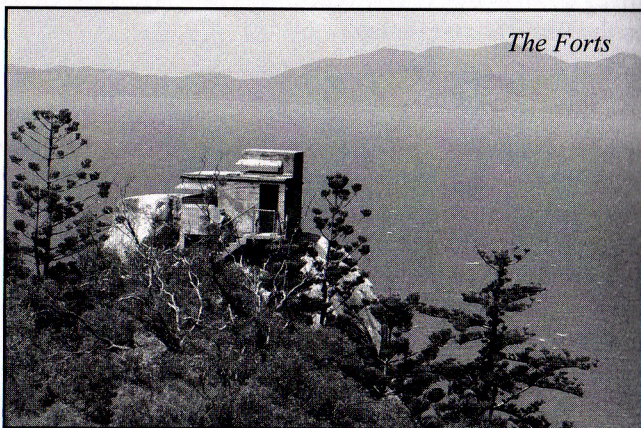
The Arcadia Track trailheads, which are 3km apart, are at the end of Mandalay Avenue, Nelly Bay, and Endeavour Road, Arcadia. Mandalay Avenue connects directly with the main road, but to enter Endeavour Road from the main road, you turn into Hayles Avenue first. Bus travellers will find it easy to access the Arcadia Track from either end. If you ask, the bus driver will drop you near the trailheads at the junction of Mandalay Street and Elena Street, or at the junction of Endeavour Road and Hayles Avenue. The western trailhead is a little over 500m from the Elena Street/Mandalay Road junction and the eastern trailhead is 200m from the Endeavour Road/Hayles Avenue junction. If you leave a vehicle at either trailhead, the bus offers a convenient return link.

The Arcadia Track is 5km long. From Mandalay Avenue, it follows Gustav Creek through dense scrub up the valley between Arcadia and Mount Cook. It is a moderate climb, the grade increasing as the path swings away from the creek. At a water supply tank 1.8km from Mandalay Avenue the path swings abruptly eastward up a short steep switchback then levels out. There are views of Horseshoe Bay, which is 2.2km to the north, and as you head eastward you glimpse the forts across the valley. About 3.6km from the start of the walk, a 230m side track connects with the main road ④. A short distance further on there is a second junction with a 250m side track that leads to Sphinx Lookout ⑤, which overlooks Whitfield Cove and Bremner Point. From the junction, the path descends to the eastern trailhead at the end of Endeavour Road ⑥.



THE FORTS - 1 HOUR RETURN 8

The trailhead for the 4km return walk to the Forts is at the junction of the main road and Radical Bay Road. The bus stops at the trailhead. This pleasant walk leads to an interesting WW2 historical site. There is a lookout 250m in from the trailhead. The trail follows an army road built to service two gun



emplacements, two forts and a supporting encampment. The first 450m is sealed and is still in use as a service road to a water tank; beyond the tank it is unsealed. The historic site is 600m beyond the tank. There is a site map of the original encampment; numbered markers identify specific sites and side paths meander among the ruins. The road ends just below the forts, splitting to form an 800m circuit path that accesses the gun emplacements and forts. Steel ladders provide access to the observation towers, which offer spectacular 360-degree views.

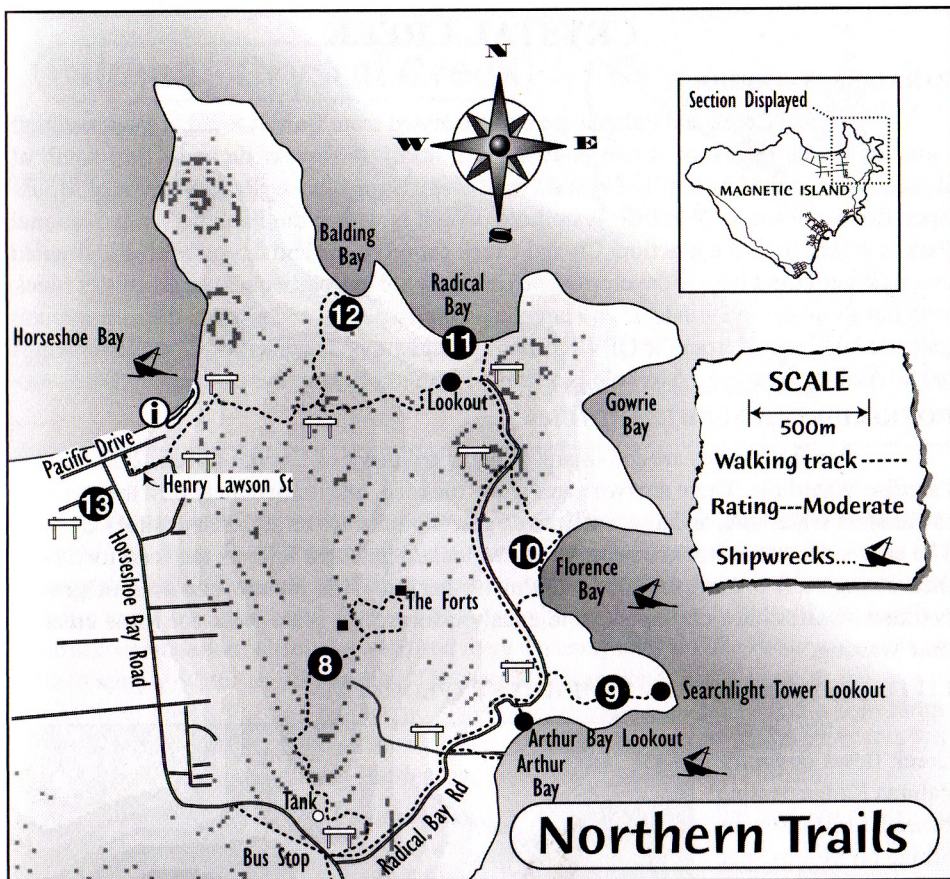
BAY WALKS - 2 TO 4 HOURS

It is 4.5km from the start of Radical Bay Road to Horseshoe Bay along the old coast road. Most walkers explore the sidetracks, visiting Arthur Bay Lookout, the Searchlight Tower Lookout and the four bays, which extends the walk to 7.5km. With so much to see, it is worth packing lunch and allowing extra time.

The trail follows Radical Bay Road, which curves down from the Forts trailhead to Arthur Bay. The access to the bay follows the creek bank, which can be blocked by the tide. The small bay has a shelter shed on the beach. Beyond Arthur Bay, the road climbs over a peninsula that separates Arthur Bay from Florence Bay. There are two paths leading off to the east, the first a short path to Arthur Bay Lookout, which offers a birds-eye view of the bay, and the second, a longer 500m path to the Searchlight Tower Lookout 9, which is a WW2 structure with a lookout on top. There is a picnic table near the lookout. Beyond here the road descends to Florence Bay 10, which has a scout camp and toilets. Florence Bay is arguably the most beautiful of the four bays. If you stroll along the beach you can exit via the path at the opposite end instead of following the road.

From Florence Bay, the road climbs over a saddle and descends to Radical Bay 11, ending at the boundary to private property. This point is 1.4km from Balding Bay and 1.6km from Horseshoe Bay. Radical Bay beach is accessed via a 150m side path along the property boundary.

The path to Balding Bay and Horseshoe Bay continues west from Radical Bay



Road, passing behind the private property and climbing over the saddle that separates the two bays. There is a lookout over Radical Bay 220m beyond the turnoff to the beach. The path tops the saddle 240m beyond the lookout, descending a little as it approaches the Balding Bay turnoff, 800m from Radical Bay. A 600m side track descends from the junction to Balding Bay 12. There is a toilet at the entrance to the bay and a shelter shed and a couple of picnic tables at the eastern end of the beach.

From the Balding Bay junction a 450m path descends to the mangroves behind Horseshoe Bay, and continues a further 1km to the foreshore business area. Negotiating the mangroves without getting wet feet is dependent on the tide, so time your arrival accordingly. The path weaves behind the mangroves then follows a pipeline across coastal boulders to Henry Lawson Street. At the western end of the street a footbridge crosses the creek to the foreshore and shops at Horseshoe Bay.

HORSESHOE BAY LAGOON - 10 MINUTES RETURN 13

This is an easy short stroll to a wetland wildlife reserve. It connects with the main road, 250m from Pacific Drive at Horseshoe Bay.

CRYSTAL CREEK

PARADISE WATERHOLE

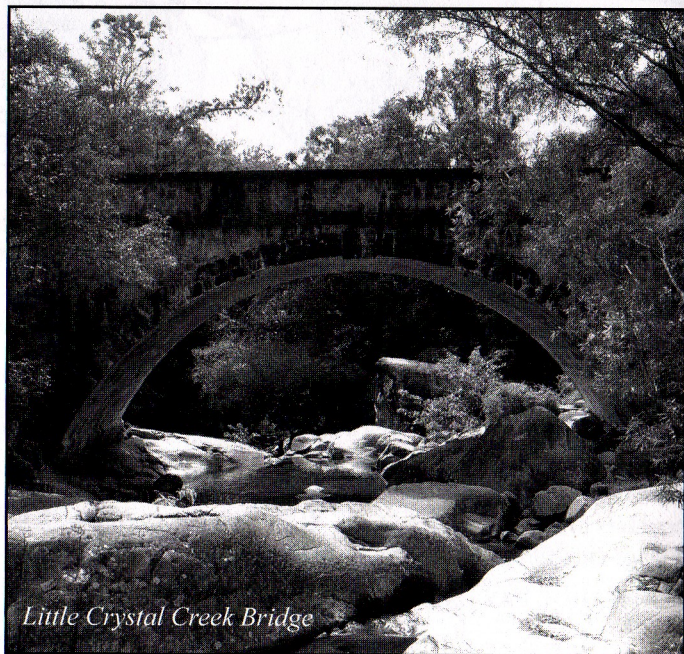
Crystal Creek and Paluma are both accessed from Barrett Road, a loop road that joins the Bruce Highway at two points, 61km north of Townsville and 41km south of Ingham. The signed turnoff to Crystal Creek along Spiegelhauer Road is north of Mount Spec Road to Paluma. Paradise Waterhole, which is within the Paluma Range National Park is 4.3km from the junction. Crystal Creek campground and day-user area is situated amongst gum trees beside the creek. The campground has barbeques, an amenities block with hot showers, and toilets. If you intend camping a permit and a key to the campground gate can be obtained from the QPWS offices in Ingham or Townsville. Advance bookings are advisable. Paradise Waterhole is an easy 100m stroll from the campground.

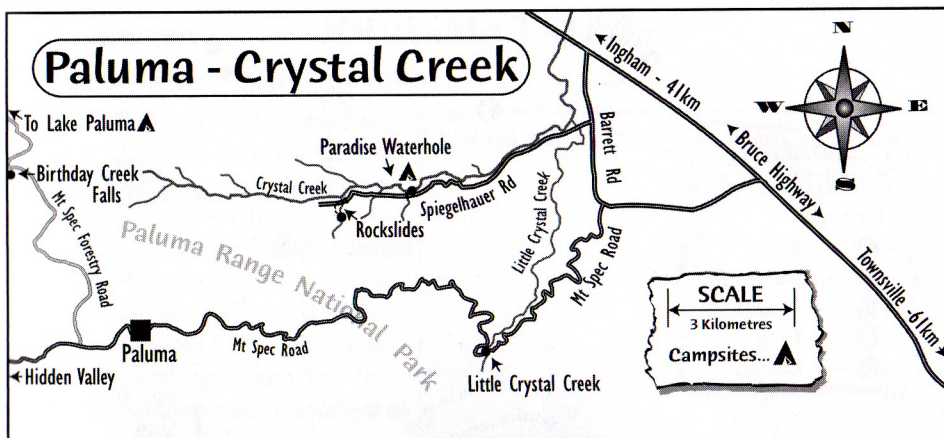
ROCKSLIDES - 20 MINUTES RETURN

The Rockslides are in Nolans Gully, a tributary of Crystal Creek, 2km beyond Paradise Waterhole. There are two gates along the road, one immediately past the entrance to Paradise Waterhole, and a second locked gate 2km further on at the Rockslides carpark. The easy walk to the Rockslides starts at the locked gate and follows the road for 200m, then swings left toward the creek, 200m further on. This picturesque area of granite boulders, waterslides, clear pools and eucalypt forest is a great place for some creative time wasting.

LITTLE CRYSTAL CREEK - 30 MINUTES EXPLORATION

Little Crystal Creek flows down the Paluma Range passing beneath a historic stone bridge on Mount Spec Road, 11km before Paluma. There is a carpark, barbeques, tables and information next to the bridge. A series of paths and steps negotiate the creek bank above and below the bridge. Tables beside the lower pools offer a cool haven for those wishing to picnic a little closer to nature.





PALUMA

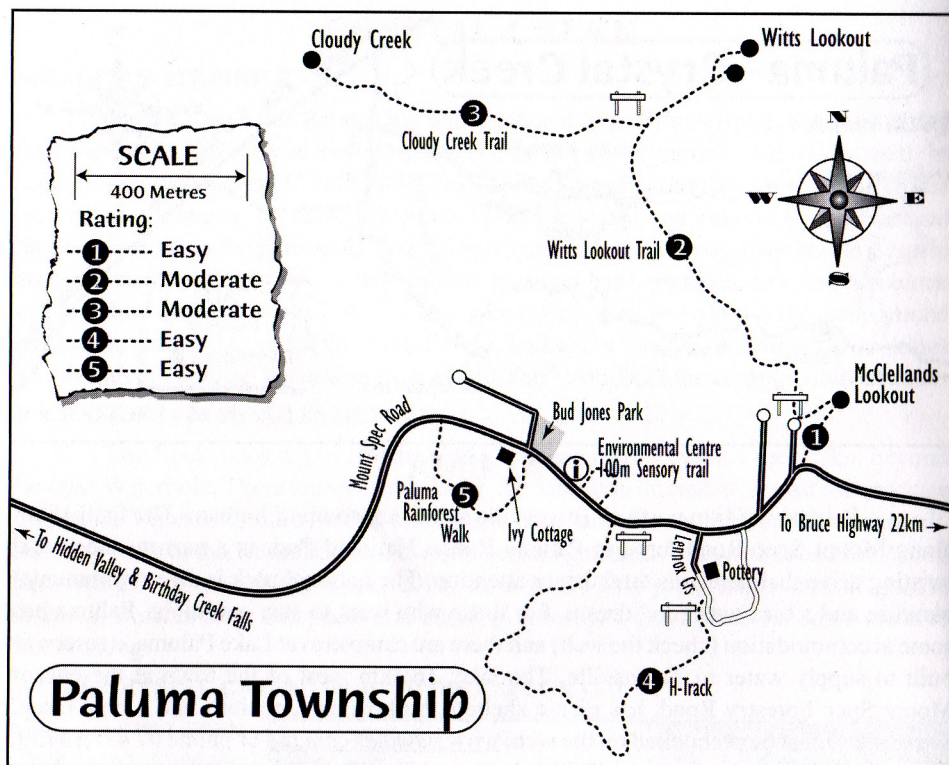
Paluma is 84km north of Townsville and 63km south of Ingham. The final 18km along Mount Spec Road through Paluma Range National Park is a narrow, steep and twisting drive that demands total driver attention. The national park is an environmental paradise and a bird watchers' dream. For those who want to stay overnight, Paluma has some accommodation (check the web) and there are campsites at Lake Paluma, a reservoir built to supply water to Townsville. The lake, 16.3km west of the town at the end of Mount Spec Forestry Road, has picnic shelters, barbeques, amenities and a boat ramp. Camp sites must be prebooked on the web: www.ngwater.com.au, or phone 07 4759 4759. There is also accommodation at Hidden Valley, about 20km beyond Paluma.

Five walks begin in Paluma - the first three are sequential and are described under one heading. The times given are walking times only, so allow extra time to explore and appreciate nature.

MCCLELLANDS & WITTS LOOKOUT + CLOUDY CREEK - 2½ HOURS RETURN

As you enter Paluma, turn right into Loop Road at the first intersection, then right again into McClellands Lookout carpark, which is the starting point for the three sequential walks. The 150m access path to McClellands Lookout ❶ starts at the northeast corner of the carpark. There are picnic facilities and toilets at the lookout. A sealed path continues on from the lookout to a passenger set-down point on Loop Road. At this point you are 1.5km from Wits Lookout and 2km from Cloudy Creek.

From Loop Road the track is unsealed but clearly defined. It follows a gentle grade through majestic rainforest, forking at a junction 350m from Wits Lookout. The Wits Lookout path ❷ breaks out of the rainforest into eucalypt forest, ending on two rock outcrops, 50m apart. The views extend from Halifax Bay and the Palm Islands to Hillock Point on Hinchinbrook Island. The Cloudy Creek path ❸ heads 1.1km northwest and descends to a series of small falls on Cloudy Creek. The return walk takes about 2½ hours.



PALUMA H-TRACK - 40 MINUTES ④

The Paluma H-Track is an easy 1.3km historic trail along an old timber hauling track. The trail starts at Lennox Crescent, just beyond Paluma Pottery and descends through montane rainforest past mining and logging relics. It then climbs gradually to the exit on Mount Spec Road. If you return to the trail entrance, the walk is about 2km overall.

PALUMA RAINFOREST WALK - 20 MINUTES ⑤

The Paluma Rainforest Walk (also known as the Ivy Cottage Walk) is a 580m loop, similar to the H-Track. It is the least demanding walk, discounting the short path to McClellands Lookout. The entrance is on Mount Spec Road opposite Bud Jones Park, just before Ivy Cottage. The unsealed track loops behind Ivy Cottage, descending to a rainforest creek past an old tin-race, then climbs back to rejoin Mount Spec Road 200m west of the entrance.

BIRTHDAY CREEK FALLS - 20 MINUTES RETURN

Birthday Creek Falls is 12km west of Paluma. Turn off Mount Spec Road 4.6km beyond Paluma onto the unsealed Mount Spec Forestry Road. The track to the falls is 6.8km further on. Lake Paluma is 4.9km beyond Birthday Creek Falls. The unsealed rainforest track zigzags 500m from the roadside carpark down to the head of the falls. A short extension path accesses the base of the falls.

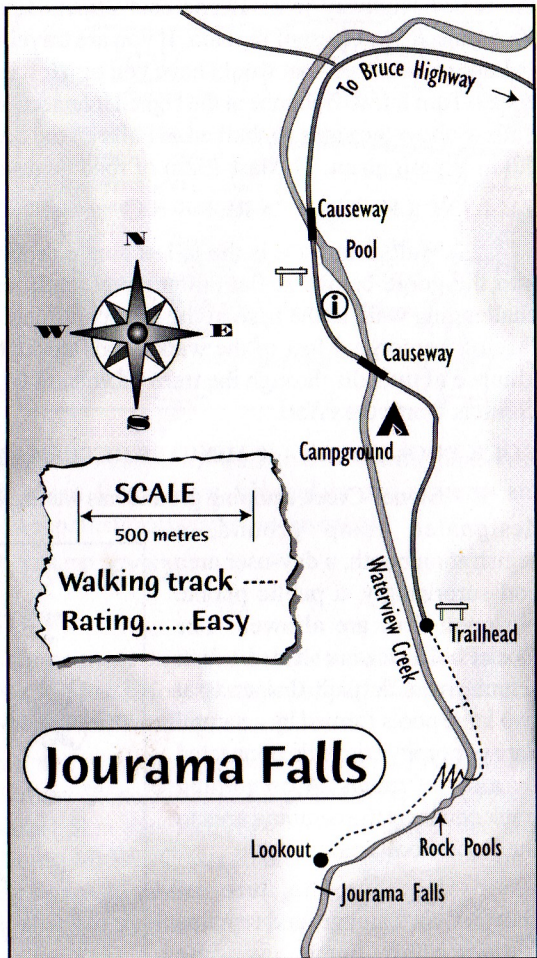
JOURAMA FALLS

JOURAMA FALLS - 1 HOUR RETURN

The turnoff to Jourama Falls is 88km north of Townsville and 23km south of Ingham. The falls are 6km from the Bruce Highway in the Paluma Range National Park, Jourama Falls section. The access road is only sealed for the first 1.5km. The Park is closed to visitors during times of flooding, when the two causeways and the creek crossing on the Jourama Falls walk are impassable. At the day-user area there is a small swimming pool in the creek, picnic facilities and information boards. The camping area is beyond the second causeway. It has self registration facilities, toilets, cold showers, gas barbeques and drinking water. It is wise to make early bookings for public holiday periods by phoning QPWS on 07 4777 2822, as the campground is very popular.

Jourama Falls is the main cascade on Waterview Creek, fed by water shed from the rainforest on Seaview Range. The creek banks are bordered by rainforest, but the main vegetation in the gorge is sparse eucalypt forest. Stands of Moreton Bay Ash and Stringy Bark trees intersperse massive salmon pink boulders, a characteristic colour of feldspar-rich granite.

The 1.5km path starts at the end of the road, passing a side path to the creek bank 300m in. There is a creek crossing with safety chains and cement foot-pads to assist walkers 200m further on. Across the creek the path zigzags up the bank. At the top of the first switchback a sign points toward some steps down to the creek and the rock pools below the falls, another sign points toward the falls, 450m away. After a short climb up six more switchbacks the path levels out to the falls lookout. The view from the lookout is magnificent. The terraced cascade plunges down the pink rock face over black igneous rock dykes that slice through the granite. The return walk is an easy 1 hour stroll.



WALLAMAN FALLS

From Townsville, the turnoff to Wallaman Falls is in the centre of Ingham where the Bruce Highway joins Lannercost Street. Turn left at the intersection and head to Trebonne, 8.9km west of Ingham. If you are travelling south from Cairns, ignore the signs in Lannercost Street that would have you turn left toward Townsville and continue straight ahead. Turn left at Trebonne at the signed intersection indicating that it is 42km to Wallaman Falls. Follow the signs to Wallaman Falls up the coastal range to Lumholtz National Park, 52km from Ingham. The last 19km of road is unsealed.

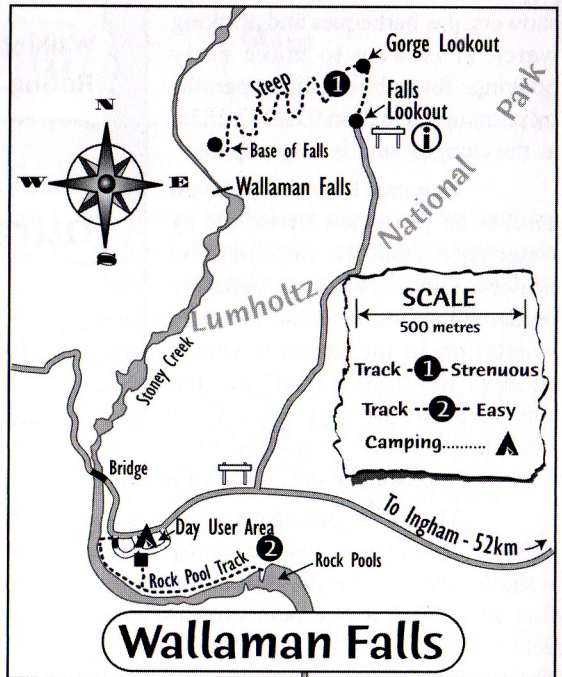
FALLS WALK - 2 HOURS RETURN ①

Wallaman Falls is the tallest single drop waterfall in Australia, plunging 305m into the gorge below. A flat 300m paved path leads to the Gorge Lookout, where the challenging walk to the base of the falls continues on down a steep 1km path cut into the face of the gorge. Most of the walk winds through shady rainforest, with an occasional glimpse of the falls through the trees. If you are fit and the weather is smiling on you, the climb is worth the effort.

ROCK POOL TRACK - 40 MINUTES RETURN ②

Stoney Creek camping ground has water, shelter sheds with gas barbeques, toilets, designated camp ground, a registration booth, a day-user area and surprisingly, a public phone. No open fires are allowed. The Rock Pool Track is a shaded 1.2km return riverside path that ends at two large pools formed by a natural dam of porphyritic rock, connected by a set of rapids. A conjoining track connects the camping area to the Rock Pool Track.

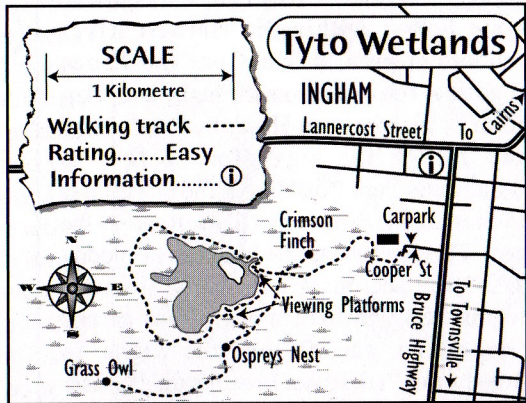
Without the lure of showers, the campground remains a quiet affair, but it has some special attractions for the dirt-resistant. From the creek bank platypus can be seen foraging for food in the evening, and tortoise recklessly ignore national park regulations, panhandling idle campers for whatever food scraps they may have to offer.



TYTO BIRD PARK

TYTO WETLANDS NATURE WALK - 2 TO 3 HOURS RETURN

It is easy to overlook this 90 hectare wetland nature park as you pass through Ingham. Cooper Street, the turnoff to the park from the Bruce Highway, is only 500m south of the intersection of the highway and Lannercost Street, Ingham's main street. The information centre on the intersection has a detailed information sheet that contains a map of the wetland and a bird list. Level mown paths circle the lagoons and lead to viewing platforms where nesting sites and feeding waterbirds can be observed. The overall distance, which includes the return walk to the viewing platforms and the circuit around the lagoons, is about 10km. Hats, binoculars and cameras are recommended equipment, and mosquito repellent and water are essential.



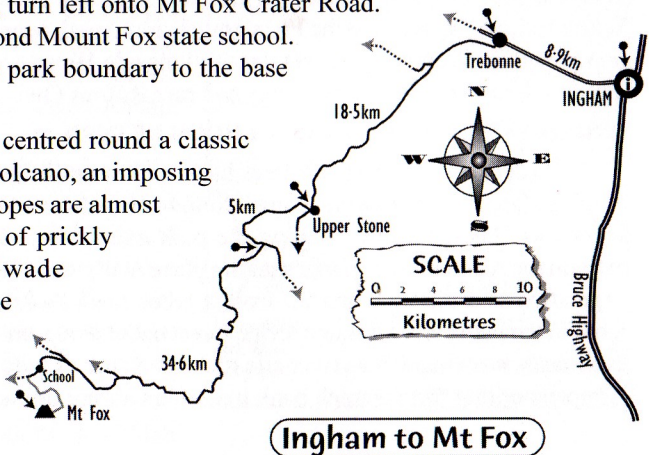
MOUNT FOX

MOUNT FOX CRATER - 1 HOUR RETURN

Mount Fox National Park is 67km southwest of Ingham. The road is sealed except for short sections at the base of the range and just before the national park. The section of road that climbs the Seaview Range is steep and winding.

From Ingham, head 8.9km west to Trebonne along the Abergowrie Road, where a sign indicates the route to Mt Fox. Follow Stone River Road to Upper Stone, 27.4km from Ingham. Turn right and drive another 5km then turn right onto the range road and finally, 63.5km from Ingham, turn left onto Mt Fox Crater Road. The national park is 1km beyond Mount Fox state school. An unsealed road follows the park boundary to the base of Mount Fox.

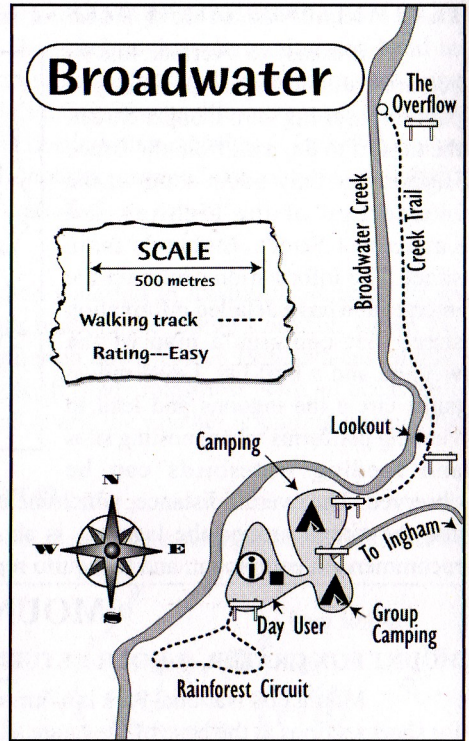
The national park is centred round a classic cone-shaped extinct basaltic volcano, an imposing feature in the landscape. Its slopes are almost treeless, but there are plenty of prickly shrubs and high grass to wade through. If you don't mind the scrabble to the top, the view from the summit is spectacular.



Ingham to Mt Fox

BROADWATER STATE FOREST PARK

Broadwater State Forest Park lies beside Broadwater Creek in the Abergowrie State Forest within the Herbert River catchment area, 47km from the Bruce Highway. Turn west from the highway 3.7km north of Ingham onto Hawkins Creek Road and follow the signs for 28.1km to Broadwater Park Road. From the turnoff it is 14.5km along Broadwater Park Road to the park. This road is unsealed and can be muddy in the wet season. Alternatively, from the centre of Ingham drive through Trebonne and Lannercost and follow the signs to Broadwater Park Road. Broadwater day-user area is beside a deep pool in Broadwater Creek. The park is a popular destination for twitchers, as it abounds with birdlife. Both the day-user area and the camping area have picnic facilities, with gas and wood fired BBQs, and toilets. The camping area has cold showers. A self registration booth is provided for payment of camping fees. Bookings can be made by phoning Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in Ingham on 07 4777 2822.



RAINFOREST CIRCUIT WALK - 30 MINUTES

There are two walks; the shorter path is a relaxing 1.6km rainforest circuit with interpretive signs along the way that describe features of the forest. The first 200m of path is an elevated boardwalk that provides access to and encircles a 200-year-old, 50m tall White Haired Fig. Beyond the Fig a gravel circuit path penetrates the forest past perennial ponds with resident tortoise, returning alongside Broadwater Creek, a platypus habitat. The forest is also home to Bettongs and rare Rufous Owls.

BROADWATER CREEK TRAIL - 1 HOUR RETURN

The longer 3km return creek bank walk starts in the camping area, passing through eucalypt forest. The level gravel path follows Broadwater Creek to a deep swimming hole known as 'The Overflow'. Along the path interpretive signs identify forest types and explain the regenerative changes taking place in the area. There is a view over the riparian vegetation to a distant waterfall from a creek bank lookout along the way. Beyond the lookout the path passes through a vine forest understorey, an area of rainforest regeneration, eventually weaving across riverside rocks to a small sandy beach at the 'The Overflow'. A rope dangling from a creek bank tree offers abrupt immersion for those who so desire.

DALRYMPLE GAP

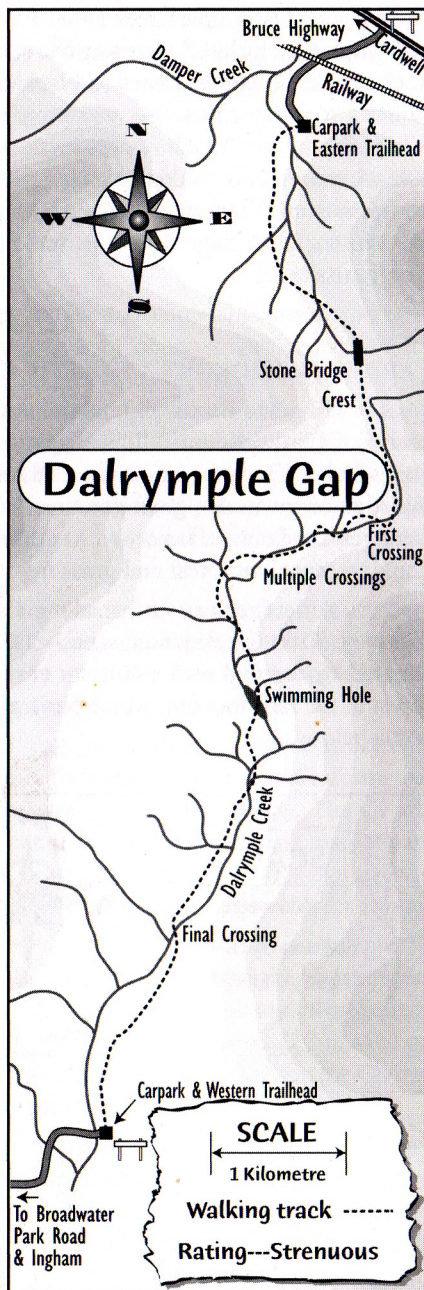
This 8km walking track roughly follows an old road constructed in the 1860s by the owner of the Valley of Lagoons cattle station to access the port at Cardwell. Prior to that Aborigines used the same route through the hills. The eastern Dalrymple Gap trailhead is 14.2km south of Cardwell Post Office, just south of Damper Creek. It is signposted. The parking area is 1.1km from the highway along a single lane dirt track. There is a bush camp site with no amenities 50m from the start of the track. If you intend walking through to the western trailhead, you will end up about 70km by road from the eastern entry point, so it is necessary to arrange a rendezvous. Two alternative return walks are suggested in the text below.

The road link between the eastern and western trailheads is as follows: From Damper Creek drive 37.3km south along the Bruce Highway and turn west into Hawkins Creek Road. Drive 28.1km to Broadwater Park Road. The turnoff to the western Dalrymple Gap trailhead is 3km along Broadwater Park Road, and the trailhead carpark is 4.4km beyond the turnoff.

DALRYMPLE GAP TRACK - 4 HOURS

The eastern approach to Dalrymple Gap passes through dry sclerophyll forest among granite outcrops, characteristic of the exposed eastern face of the Cardwell Range. From the carpark, the trail crosses a watercourse and begins a steady climb. As the altitude increases the forest shows evidence of heavier rainfall, with populations of orchids and moss draping the trees. There is a historic stone bridge 2km from the carpark. A walk to this superbly crafted stone and brick construction can be undertaken as a moderate 1 hour return hike.

The highest point on the track is 100m



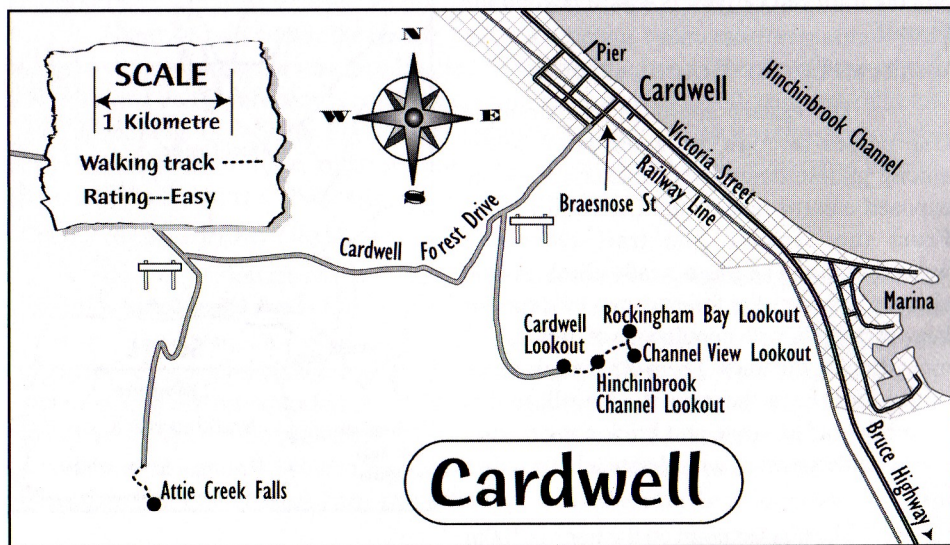
past the stone bridge. Beyond the crest the forest changes markedly and the path deteriorates. It descends steeply through a shady forest of ferns and palms, then levels out, crossing Dalrymple Creek about 1.5km beyond the bridge. From here the trail follows Dalrymple Creek closely, crossing and re-crossing via stepping stones. There are occasional track markers (yellow arrows on black circles) attached to trees where the track deviates from its westerly course. As you progress the creek increases in size, fed by numerous tributaries. About 2 to 2½ hours brisk walk from the carpark there is a good swimming hole. A return walk to this swimming hole would make a pleasant day trip if arranging transport from the western trailhead is a problem. Beyond the pool, the 3.5km trail to the western trailhead carpark is unremarkable, passing through spindly dry scrub, so you won't miss much.

CARDWELL

CARDWELL LOOKOUT AND ATTIE CREEK - 30 MINUTES EACH

To get to Cardwell Lookout and Attie Creek, turn off the Bruce Highway in the centre of Cardwell and follow Braensnose Street across the railway line onto Cardwell Forest Drive. The road, which passes through eucalypt and pine forests, is unsealed beyond the edge of town. A signed junction, 1.1km from the highway, indicates the turnoff to Cardwell Lookout, 1.5km away. At the lookout there is a 1.3km return walk among granite boulders, eucalypt forest and grass trees to three lookout points above Cardwell.

Attie Creek is further along Cardwell Forest Drive. Turn left 2.3km from the highway, Attie Creek picnic area is 1.8km further on. Picnic tables and barbecues are situated by a small rock pool. An easy 1.2km return walk passes through sclerophyll forest to the falls lookout, which has a good view of the 15m waterfall and the cascading pools below.



HINCHINBROOK ISLAND - THORSBORNE TRAIL

BOOKING YOUR WALK

The Thorsborne Trail is the pre-eminent walking track of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Thirty four kilometres of rough trail connect George Point, the southeastern corner of the island, to Ramsay Bay, which backs the mangrove swamps at the northeastern extent of the island. The trail passes through a succession of untouched ecosystems. It dips down into each successive bay then curves inland to climb the rock peninsulas that separate the beach campsites. The diversity and beauty of the trail has made it an environmental icon, so to protect the island from being loved to death a management plan has been established.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service issue a limited number of camping permits. Bookings can be made online at www.epa.qld.gov.au, or by phoning the Cardwell office on 07 4066 8601. The website has a credit card facility for paying the moderate camping fees, and you can check booking levels. The island has a high season and a low season. High season bookings (March to October) are usually heavy, and school holiday periods may need to be booked up to a year in advance. Last minute bookings are usually only available in the hot low season period – not the best time to contemplate a strenuous walk. During this time the weather and water availability will determine whether the trail is open at all.

Bookings are limited to 45 persons on the island at any one time, and campers must carry proof of registration and abide by set conditions. After registration, QPWS supplies walkers with instructions, a tide chart and a map. The map has reasonable time estimates for each sector of the trail and botanic information.

On or near your day of departure QPWS treat you to a compulsory instructional video and brief you on current conditions on the trail. The video is amusing and informative and knowledge of trail conditions is essential, especially water availability. The QPWS website has an essential info package that you can download. QPWS park rangers are located at the Reef and Rainforest Centre next to the jetty in Cardwell and they will answer queries about the island. Crocodiles, creeks and campsites are good topics to start with.

Two ferry services transport walkers to the island daily during the high season, and on alternate days during the low season. Hinchinbrook Ferries service the Ramsay Bay trailhead from Cardwell and can be contacted by phoning 07 4066 8270 or visiting their website: www.hinchinbrookferries.com.au. Lucinda Ferries, who service the George Point trailhead from Lucinda can be contacted by phoning 07 4777 8307.

Transport between Cardwell, Ingham and Lucinda is handled by Ingham Travel, who are flexible, friendly and happy to help. If you are backpacking through the area they can advise on interstate coach times that will match ferry timetables, and arrange your land-based bookings. Ingham Travel can be contacted by phone on 07 4776 5666 or email on ightravel@ozemail.com.au.

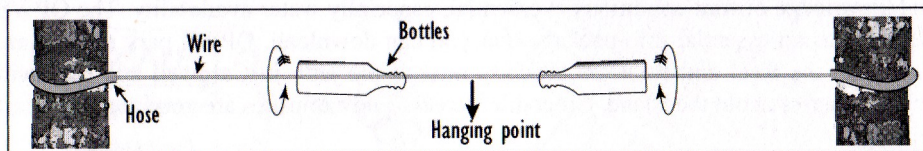
WALKING WITH CHILDREN

Walking long distances with children can be challenging, but problems can be minimised with careful planning. Carry lots of energy snacks that can be eaten as you walk to keep their energy levels up. The longest section of trail is 10.5km, so start walking early to avoid the heat. Set a sustainable pace for a full days walk, allowing for swims and detours. A light pack and a bigger pack can be shared amongst the kids to give someone a rest - psychologically it works. Water can be scarce on the island, so it is essential to carry two litres per adult and one litre per child each day. To minimise discomfort consider purchasing drink containers that clip onto the children's backpacks; an adult can carry most of the water in a purpose made backpack. Any extra weight is a burden, so check with QPWS in Cardwell before you leave to confirm where water is available.

The ferries run daily during the dry season, but after the first of November they run every second day. This is problematic for people with kids because they have to shorten the hike by a day or add an extra day. Completing the walk in four days (three nights) is a hard slog for kids and six days (five nights) is usually too long. So book for midyear and stop off at the four main camping areas over five days (four nights).

TIPS

Bush rats live around the campsites. These resourceful little creatures have developed a taste for every food group imaginable. They can chew their way through everything except the steel food storage bins at the campsites, and it is impossible to hide food from their inquisitive noses. If you have access to a bin chances are there will only be enough space for your food, not your backpack, which is apparently a very satisfying snack. If you put the pack in your tent, they will burrow through your tent and the pack. If you sling the pack on a rope between two trees the rats will either tight-rope out to the pack and burrow in from the top, chew through the rope, or both. However, there is a well tested scientific way out of this dilemma, illustrated in the diagram below.



The wire rope is a light multi-strand affair, and the rotating rat-dumping-isolating-devices are plastic bottles with a hole pierced through the base. A short section of hose protects the trees. The device weighs almost nothing, and it allows you to get some sleep. If you are travelling, and don't have access to a backyard shed, the supermarket in Cardwell usually stocks the makings. Take the device with you when you leave.

Tidal creeks are crocodile territory. Tides are something that landlubbers forget about, so QPWS supply a tide chart to help you plan safe creek crossings. Consult it to make sure that high tide does not prevent you from reaching the ferry at the appointed time on your departure day.

Fresh water availability is an issue during extended dry periods. QPWS will advise as to where water is available, but you may have to walk some distance from the

campsite to get it. Camping stores sell light, sturdy collapsible plastic water containers that carry enough water for an overnight camp but can be folded and carried in your pack when empty.

The mosquitos and sandflies on the island are often unbearable. Repellent may work, but if you wish to linger for a day or two at a beachside campsite, consider taking a mosquito net to sling from a shady branch overhanging the beach. That way you can lie back and be cooled by a light southeasterly breeze, while the little bloodsuckers can only lust after you from a distance.

The trail markers on the island have a different colour code for each direction so you can confidently confirm that you are heading in the right direction when the track gets a bit curly. This system does not work when you take the detours down to the bays. Some of the most notable markers are the stone cairns that identify the trail across the rocky bays. They appear to have been put in place by charitable fellow walkers, who should be commended for their artistic skills.

RAMSAY BAY TO NINA BAY - 2½ HOURS

The Hinchinbrook Island Ferry winds its way through mangrove swamps to deposit you at a landing near the southern extremity of Ramsay Bay. Ramsay Bay Boardwalk connects the landing to the beach. It is worth taking a moment to get your bearings before heading on. Looking south, Nina Peak is directly in line with the beach. The imposing mountain behind Nina Peak is Mount Bowen.

The trail follows the beach to the headland at the southern end of the bay, curves around behind the headland, passes along Blacksand Beach briefly, then heads inland over a saddle to the east of Nina Peak. At the top of the saddle there is a 250m path that leads up to Nina Peak and fabulous views. To the north a vast panorama of mangrove swamps separates the northern and southern sections of the island. Nina Bay lies southeast of the peak and Little Ramsay Bay lies beyond the southern headland of Nina Bay. The small island east of Little Ramsay Bay is Agnes Island. Mount Bowen towers over everything. From the saddle, the trail dips down to Nina Bay, passing through a mangrove swamp at the rear of the bay - your first opportunity to test the tide chart. At Nina Bay fresh water can be collected from the creek at the southern end of the beach. In dry conditions you may have to walk a few hundred metres up the creek to get to a clear pool. The camping area is at the northern end of the beach.

NINA BAY TO LITTLE RAMSAY BAY - 2 HOURS

The trek from Nina Bay to Ramsay Bay is relatively short. Once again the tide will influence the creek crossing at the southern end of the bay. From the end of the beach, pick your way around Boulder Bay, using the rock cairns as a guide. Most rocks in the bay have been ground near spherical by wave action. At the southern end of this bay the path climbs over the peninsular that separates the two bays, descending onto the northern end of Little Ramsay Bay. About 250m along the beach you come to a tidal creek. Fresh water can be collected upstream along the northern bank. The campsite is on the southern side of this creek. Campers often swim in the lagoon beside the campsite, but don't take the plunge unless QPWS say it is safe.

LITTLE RAMSAY BAY TO ZOE BAY - 6 HOURS

Little Ramsay Bay to Zoe Bay is the longest section of the trail. The creek at the southern end of Little Ramsay Bay is tidal. Beyond the creek the trail passes over a rocky section to a second beach then swings inland. This is the beginning of the moderate ascent to Zoe saddle. The turnoff to Banksia Bay is 350m along the trail where a 300m path leads down through a patch of banksias to the beach. Further on, the trail crosses Banksia Creek, which may be flowing if there has been recent rain. A rough, steep descent follows a watercourse to rainforest at the northern end of the Zoe Bay lowlands. Once you reach this flat terrain, there is still about 5.5km of lowland forest to negotiate, with three major creek crossings; North Zoe Creek, Fan Palm Creek and Cyprus Pine Creek. Tidal conditions will determine when you can cross these creeks. North Zoe Creek has crocodile warning signs.

The track emerges onto the beach 600m north of the main camping area, which is next to South Zoe Creek. There are scattered campsites along the beachfront before the main campsite, some with tables. South Zoe Creek is tidal, but fresh water is available upstream toward Zoe Falls. The spectacular pool at the base of the falls is deep and crystal clear, and home to schools of curious fish. The campsite at the falls is closed. Walkers often extend their stay at Zoe Bay so they can enjoy more time at the falls.

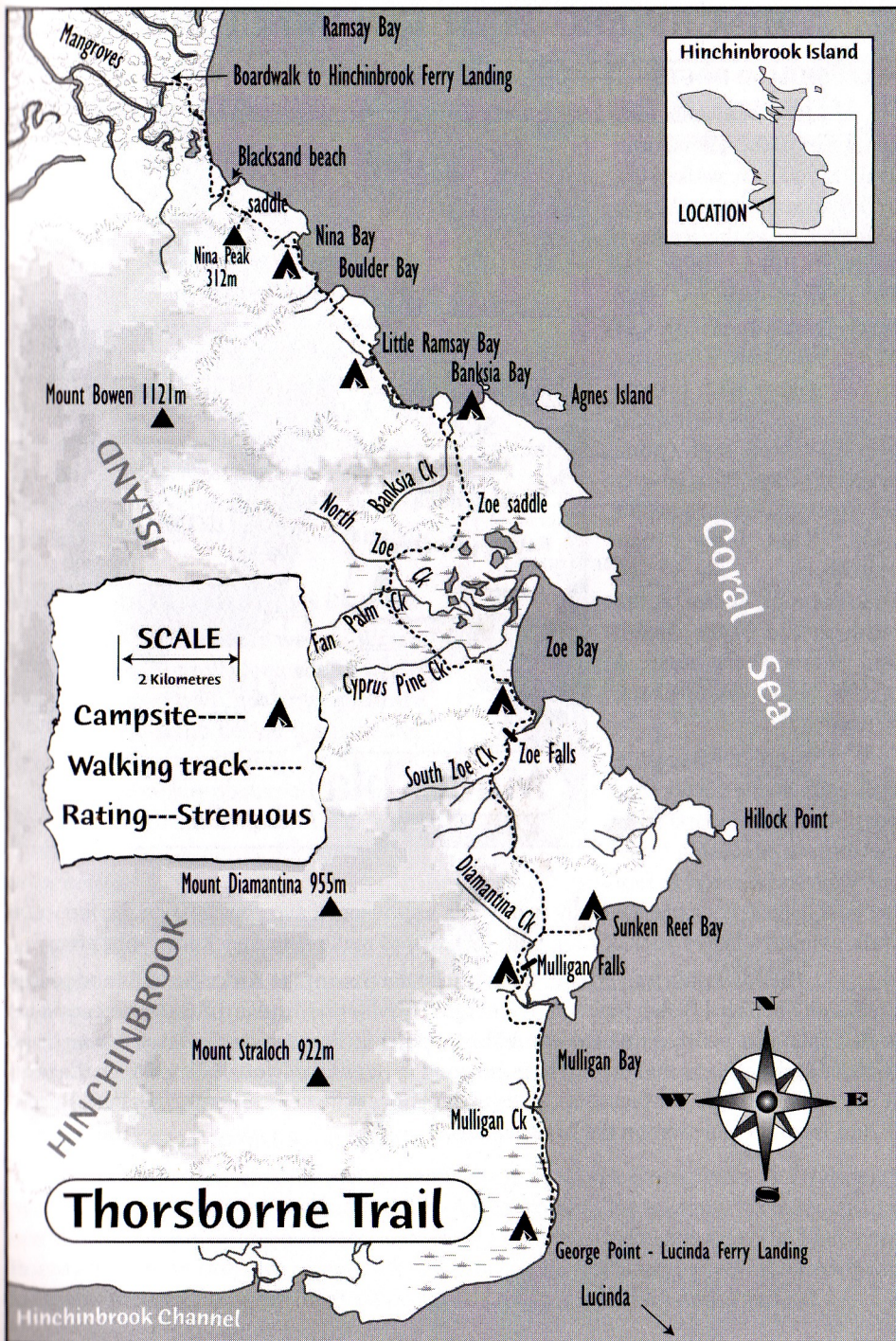
ZOE BAY TO MULLIGAN FALLS - 4½ HOURS

The trail heads inland from the rear of the Zoe Bay campsite, heading southwest, parallel to South Zoe Creek. It crosses the creek just below the falls, 900m from the campsite then climbs the rock face beside the falls - a fixed rope offers some assistance on the steepest section. From the top of the falls the trail enters dry country, climbing to a saddle that is the highest point on the trail. Rock cairns mark the saddle, which is about 2km from the falls. The 1.7km descent from the saddle to Diamantina Creek passes through dry heath country, passing the turnoff to Sunken Reef Bay 200m before the creek. Sunken Reef Bay is 900m from this junction. Camping is permitted at the bay, but there are no amenities. Water can usually be collected from a creek at the north end of the bay, but may be unavailable in dry times. For some reason the beach catches enormous quantities of debris, which detracts a little from its charm unless you are a beachcomber.

Diamantina Creek, a substantial watercourse with permanent water, is about 1km from Mulligan Falls. The small shaded campsites located in dense forest near Mulligan Falls are very popular, and there are a limited number of sites. The pool at the base of the falls is a welcome place to cool off.

MULLIGAN FALLS TO GEORGE POINT - 2½ HOURS

Beyond Mulligan Falls, the trail descends to Mulligan Bay, passing behind Diamantina Creek estuary as it approaches the beach. The trail connects with the beach 350m south of the creek mouth. From this point it is a 1.4km walk along the beach to Mulligan Creek, which must be crossed at low tide. The pick up point for the Lucinda Ferry is 2.4km further on. Pickup times are scheduled to coincide with low tide, which means you should be walking on hard sand.



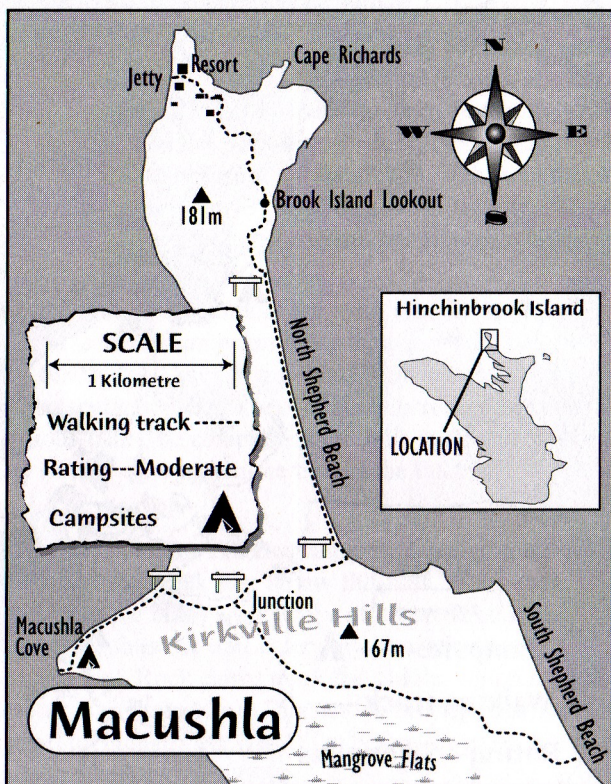
HINCHINBROOK ISLAND - MACUSHLA

MACUSHLA - 2 HOURS

The Macushla trail is not part of the Thorsborne Trail. If you have walked the trail from south to north, you will be met at the Ramsay Bay trailhead by the Hinchinbrook Ferry. The ferry continues on to Macushla Cove, a popular camping area with toilets, shelter sheds, gas barbeques, picnic tables and (non-drinking) water. This cove is the start of the Macushla trail. The ferry then continues on to Hinchinbrook Resort, at the northern end of the island, and waits there until 4 o'clock before heading back to Cardwell.

Since the Macushla trail ends at the resort it is possible to disembark from the ferry at Macushla Cove and walk to the resort before the boat leaves. It's a pleasant way to unwind, as you can leave your gear on the ferry and walk without a heavy pack. Check with the crew to make sure they know your plans.

The Macushla trail crosses the island at the base of the Kirkville Hills and passes the South Shepherd Beach junction. It emerges onto North Shepherd Beach and continues to the end of the beach. From the beach the trail climbs through rainforest, crossing Cape Richard and ending at the resort. There are good views of the Brook Islands from the trail. If you stay overnight at Macushla Cove you will have time to visit South Shepherd Beach, 2.2km from the junction on the Macushla trail.



EDMUND KENNEDY

Edmund Kennedy National Park lies along the coastal mangrove margin, 4km north of Cardwell. A sign on the Bruce Highway indicates the access road, just north of Meunga Creek. The parking area is 4.9km from the highway.

A 50m path leads to the picnic area and trailhead behind the beach. No camping is allowed in the park, but toilets and tables are provided for day-users. Mangrove environments are usually infested with mosquitos and sandflies, and Edmund Kennedy National Park is no exception. Insect repellent is essential; put some on your clothes as well, as the mosquitos have no trouble biting through thin clothing.

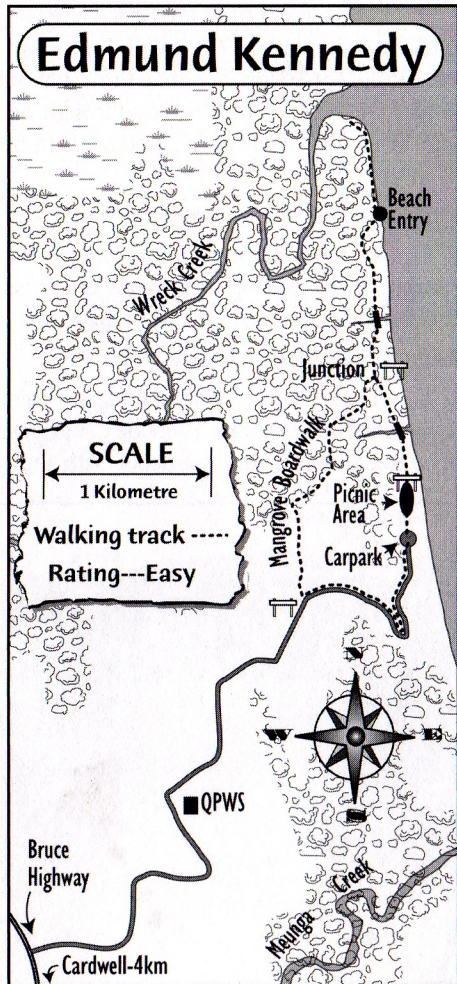
WRECK CREEK - 1½ HOURS RETURN

The 4.8km return walk to Wreck Creek is an easy stroll along a level sandy path. Scrub Fowl nesting mounds punctuate the scrub beside the path and the birds are active during the day, but animal life is mostly nocturnal. Two small foot-bridges that span tidal creeks are good observation points for spying on aquatic life.

The path leaves the northern end of the picnic area along the fore-dune between the beach and the mangrove swamp, passing the junction with the Mangrove Boardwalk circuit, and emerges onto the beach 300m south of Wreck Creek. A short stroll along the beach brings you to the creek mouth and the end of the walk. At low tide you can return to the picnic area along the beach.

MANGROVE BOARDWALK - 1½ HOURS

About 700m from the picnic area the path to Wreck Creek forks. A 1.8km path passes through mangroves behind the fore-dune, crossing the swampy sections on five narrow boardwalks, exiting onto the access road, 1.6km from the picnic area. The Mangrove Boardwalk circuit is 4.1km overall. The swamp can be fascinating if you have adequate mosquito proofing, as quiet observation reveals a lively world of mud-dwellers.



BLENCOE FALLS

The turnoff from the Bruce Highway to Kirrama Society Flats and Blencoe Falls is at Kennedy, north of Cardwell. It is 68km from Kennedy to the falls. Follow Kennedy Creek Road for 7.1km, and then turn right onto Kirrama Road. This narrow road winds up the face of the Cardwell Range through dense rainforest, which gives way to eucalypt forest at the top of the range, about 31km from Kennedy. There are three lookouts along the way.

KIRRAMA SOCIETY FLATS CIRCUIT - 20 MINUTES

Kirrama Society Flats is 32.5km from Kennedy. A 720m circuit path starts beside a couple of enormous Kauri pines and passes through a section of forest populated by massive Rose gums and Kauris. The forest is notable for its rainforest and eucalypt mix.

BLENCOE FALLS - 1 HOUR RETURN

From Society Flats the road continues on through open eucalypt forest. Follow the signs to Blencoe Falls. Blencoe Creek cascades over a spectacular 300m tiered waterfall into a deep chasm that connects with the Herbert River Gorge a few hundred metres

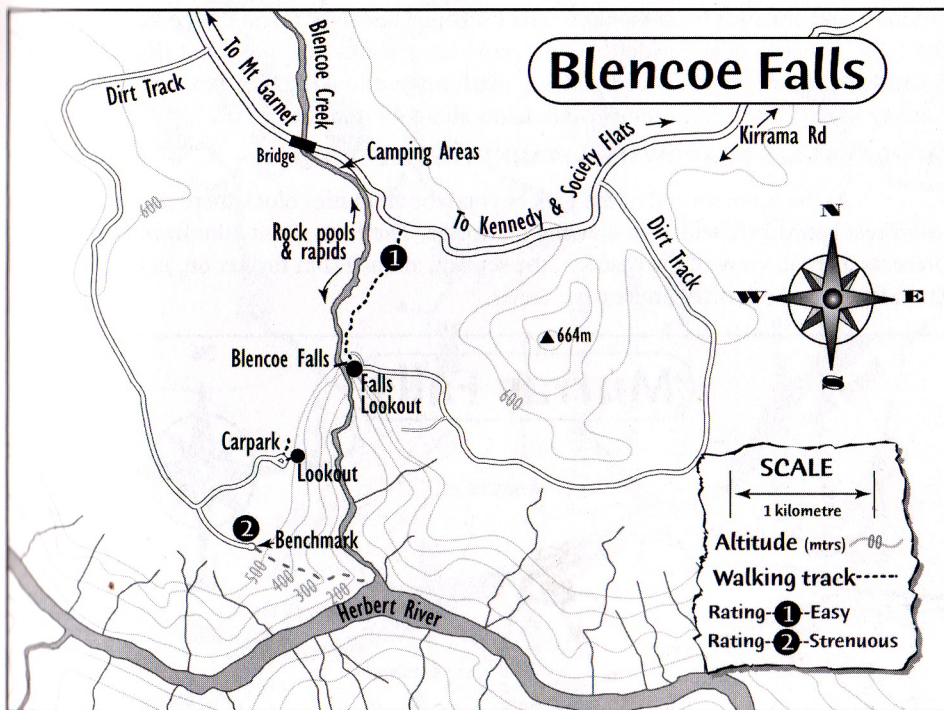
beyond the falls. The steep walls of the gorge are populated by clusters of hoop pines that cling to the rocky outcrops. A visit to the area is a real wilderness experience. The camping area beside Blencoe Creek is a popular place and the few campsites are rapidly filled during holiday periods. There are no amenities.



The start of the Falls Lookout track ❶ is 900m back toward Kennedy. The small sign fastened to a tree at the start of the track is difficult to see and so is the indistinct 1km track that follows the creek bank to the eastern falls lookout. When the water level is low hikers rock hop along the creek to the top of the falls. There is also a 5km 4WD track to

the eastern falls lookout, 2.7km back toward Kennedy.

It is a 15km return walk, or drive, to the western lookout from the campsite. Follow the road 1.5km west of Blencoe Creek bridge and turn onto the rough track to the lookout. At a fork 4.4km along this track, turn left to continue to the western lookout. The right fork diverts 450m toward the Herbert River, ending at a benchmark ② above a spur that descends to the junction of the Herbert River and Blencoe Creek. Hikers have clambered down the rough indistinct path to the river junction from this point, negotiating a 300m drop over a distance of about 900m.



MURRAY FALLS

MURRAY FALLS STATE FOREST PARK

The turnoff to Murray Falls is 16km south of Tully off the Bruce Highway. The falls are 22km from the highway along Upper Murray Road and the last 3km are unsealed. If you are heading north from Cardwell turn left at Bilyana. There are plenty of signs to show the way. Murray Falls State Forest Park lies at the base of Kirrama Range within the Wet Tropics Heritage Area. The falls are 2.4km from the state forest boundary.

At the park there is a day-user area beside the river with picnic facilities. Although swimming is not allowed beneath the falls, it is permitted in the rock pools beside the day-user facilities. Beyond the day-user area there is a large mowed camping area overhung by shady trees. Toilets, barbeques, picnic facilities and a self-registration booth are provided. Two walking tracks start from the camping area.

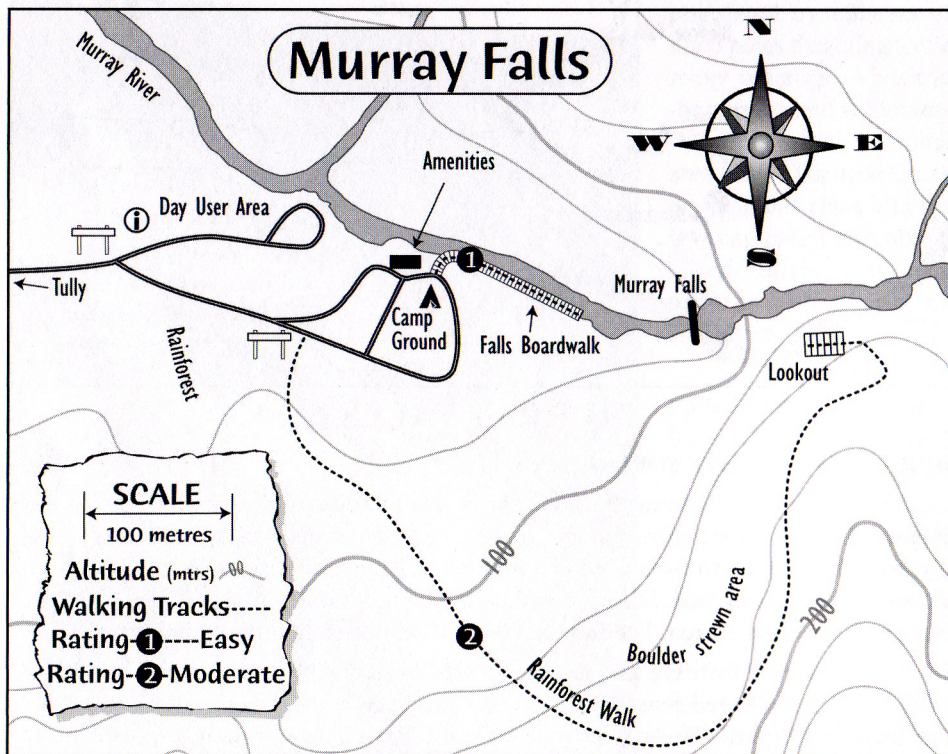
MURRAY FALLS RAINFOREST WALK - 40 MINUTES RETURN 2

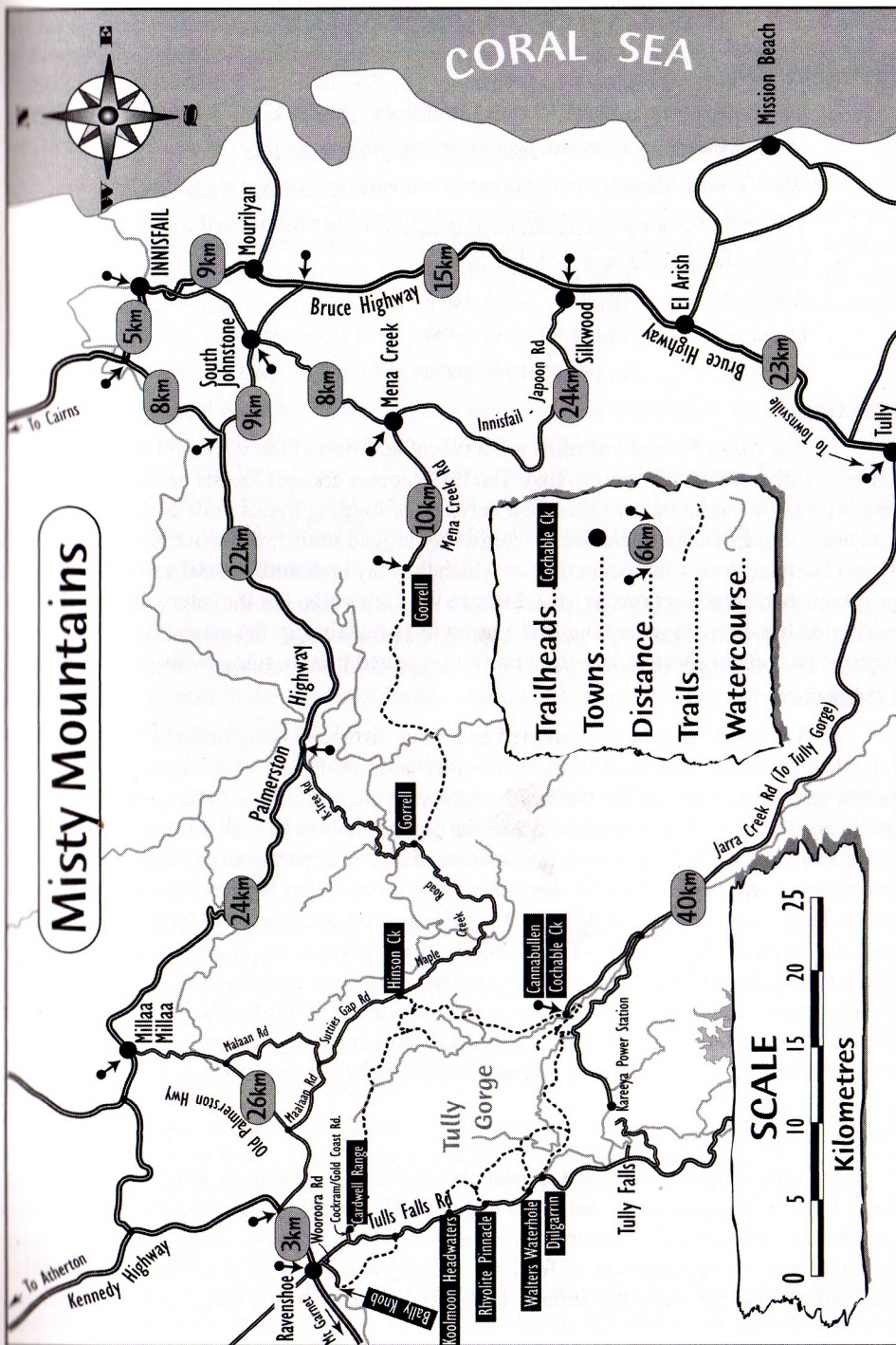
A sign on the northern side of the park marks the start of the falls lookout rainforest walk. Interpretive signs beside the track narrate the history and lore of the local Aboriginal tribe, the Girramay, and describe how local flora and fauna were used in tribal life.

The dirt track to the falls passes through lowland rainforest, criss-crossing a small creek via wooden footbridges. Rock steps aid the climb toward the falls: About halfway to the lookout the track enters a sheltered valley of mature rainforest, passing through an open area carpeted with rock. The track winds around the base of enormous boulders and emerges from the rainforest into open eucalypt forest on the hill face above the falls. A bench seat beside the path provides a scenic rest point. At the end a short boardwalk descends to a fenced viewing platform overlooking the 10m waterfall and the Murray valley. The 1.9km return walk takes about 40 minutes.

MURRAY FALLS BOARDWALK - 10 MINUTES RETURN 1

At the southern end of the park beyond the amenities block there is a short fenced rainforest boardwalk with two viewing platforms. The first, about 30m from the carpark, presents a broad view of the cascade, the second, about 120m further on, is at the base of the falls. They both offer impressive views.





MISTY MOUNTAINS

INFORMATION

For track closures check 'Track Conditions' on the Misty Mountains website.

Misty Mountains website: www.mistymountains.com.au

Wet Tropics Management Authority website: www.wettropics.gov.au

Campsite bookings: www.epa.qld.gov.au (No permit needed to walk)

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service:

Atherton.....Phone: 07 4091 1844

Innisfail.....Phone: 07 4061 5900

Cairns.....Phone: 07 4046 6600

HISTORY

The Misty Mountains trails are a recent addition to the walking trail network in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The trails access ancient forests in the Tully Gorge and McNamee Tableland by utilising a network of logging tracks built during the 1930s. The areas alongside the tracks were extensively logged until 1988, when the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area was declared, after which they lay undisturbed until a recent initiative re-established some sections as long distance walking trails. For the intervening years the rainforest has been regenerating and regrowth is reclaiming the roads. The trails pass through pockets of spectacular virgin rainforest, saved from logging by its inaccessibility.

LOGISTICS

The trails have been promoted as a long distance hiking network, but there are logistical problems that must be solved before attempting any of the trails. There is no public transport to any of the trailheads. Although each trail is less than 30km long, the trailheads are up to 200km apart by road. The access roads to Gorrell trailhead and Hinson Creek trailhead are both unsealed, and are closed by the Department of Natural Resources during wet conditions. The four alternative exit points from the Koolmoon Creek Trail are on Tully Falls Road, some distance from Ravenshoe, and the Cochable Creek campsite and trailhead is 40km from Tully. While this is more an inconvenience than an insurmountable problem; the long distance trails require careful planning, a timetable and a backup team. Because these logistical problems will affect most walkers, we have picked the most interesting sections within each trail and suggested return walks that can be completed within a day. The long distance trails are challenging, and not an option for the unfit or inexperienced.

THE TRAILS

Although each trail has a spectacular or noteworthy feature, long sections of trail pass along old logging roads that are unexceptional. Over time, the forest will regenerate and the trail infrastructure will improve. Sections of the roads are often reduced to slush by an effective amalgamation of feral pig activity and the highest rainfall in Australia. (According to some locals the annual rainfall is 6 metres.) Many creeks you wade across

along the trails are subject to flash floods. If you want to reduce the likelihood of a long wet walk, the most favourable weather seems to occur around October, when most of the creeks have shrunk to a series of crystal clear waterholes linked by gurgling rapids. The minimalist campsites on each trail are small, fairly level areas at trail junctions or near creek banks that have been chosen for practical reasons, not aesthetic value.

The Misty Mountains trailheads are clearly signposted on all of the access roads on the tablelands and the coast. There is an overall map and description at the start of each trail. The trails have blue and white signposts at most junctions and each trail is defined by different coloured arrow markers. When we map trails we use a GPS to create our own tracks and waypoints. We checked our distances against those on the signs and found some inaccuracies, but apparently they are being corrected.

LONG DISTANCE WALKS - LINKING TRAILS

There are three long distance walks from the coastal plains to Ravenshoe. One starts at the Gorrell trailhead at Mena Creek and the other two originate from the Cochable Creek campsite in the Tully Gorge. The link options are described below. The individual trails are described later in the text with accompanying maps. There is a map of the trail and road network on p37. Distances are calculated to the nearest kilometre.

Trail links from Mena Creek

Follow the Gorrell trail to Maple Creek Road (26km), and then follow Maple Creek Road to the Hinson Creek trailhead (20km). Follow the Cannabullen Creek trail to the Hinson Creek campsite and trail junction (1.7km), then turn right and follow the Cardwell Range trail to the Cardwell Range trailhead (16km). This is a 64km hike plus a 6km road connection to Ravenshoe.

Trail links from Cochable Creek campsite

Follow the Cannabullen Creek trail from Cochable Creek campsite to the Hinson Creek campsite and trail junction (12km), then follow the Cardwell Range trail to the Cardwell Range trailhead (16km). This is a 28km hike plus a 6km road connection to Ravenshoe.

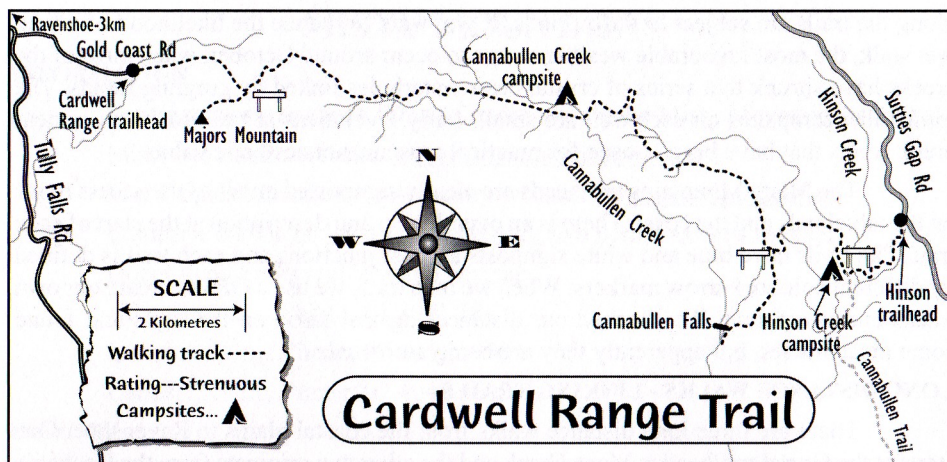
The Koolmoon Creek long distance trail follows the Djilgarrin trail to the Walters Waterhole junction (12km). From the junction it follows the interconnecting sections of the Walters Waterhole loop, the Rhyolite Pinnacle loop and the Koolmoon Creek headwaters loop to the Koolmoon Creek trailhead (10km). This is a 22km hike plus an 11km road connection to Ravenshoe along Tully Falls Road.

CARDWELL RANGE TRAIL - 2 DAYS

The Cardwell Range trailhead is 6km from Ravenshoe at the end of Gold Coast Road, off Tully Falls Road. The section of trail between the Cardwell Range trailhead and the Hinson Creek trailhead is 18.4km long, but if you include the 4.4km return walk to Cannabullen Falls, the walk extends to 22.8km.

Majors Mountain - 3 hours return

The much shorter walk to Majors Mountain starts at the Cardwell Range trailhead and follows the trail, an old logging road, for 2.2km to the Majors Mountain junction,



which is signed. It is 900m to the summit. Majors Mountain is a volcanic remnant, a rhyolite plug that is one of a group of volcanic hills that dominate the landscape near Ravenshoe. The rough trail to the summit climbs steeply through diminishing vegetation to the peak, 60m above the main trail, where a series of exposed rock outcrops offer various views of the surrounding countryside. Orchids and moss festoon the cloud forest surrounding the outcrops. It seems the peak is also a fine place for sunbaking, as in the cooler months you are quite likely to see red-bellied black snakes dozing on the rocks. The track extends a little beyond the summit, ending at a rock vantage point with good views of the surrounding hills and Ravenshoe.

For those continuing on to the Hinson Creek trailhead, the walk has barely begun. Initially, the trail climbs for about 1km but the general trend is downhill, dropping 100m over the 12km stretch to the Cannabullen Falls turnoff. The trail crosses Cannabullen Creek, the official campsite for the Cardwell Range trail, 8km from the Cardwell Range trailhead. From the Cannabullen Falls turnoff it is a further 2.3km to the Hinson Creek campsite. The campsite is 1.7km from the Hinson Creek trailhead on Sutties Gap Road.

CANNABULLEN FALLS - 5 HOURS RETURN

The Cannabullen Creek Falls trail was closed at the time of publication. The trail is still under construction and until a platform is erected there is no good vantage point to view the falls. Contact QPWS in Atherton for details. Phone: 07 4091 1844 or check the 'Track Conditions' link on the Misty Mountains website for track closures: www.mistymountains.com.au.

In the future the walk can be undertaken as part of an extended hike, or as a day trip. For day trippers the walk starts at the Hinson Creek trailhead on Sutties Gap Road and follows an old logging road for 1.7km to the Hinson Creek campsite and trail junction. From the junction you follow the Cardwell Range trail for about 2.3km, crossing a few creeks along the way, to the signed turnoff to Cannabullen Falls. The falls are 2.2km beyond the turnoff. The 12.4km return walk is moderately strenuous and takes about 5 hours.

BALLY KNOB - 3 HOURS

The Bally Knob trail starts at the Little Millstream carpark. To get to the carpark, drive 500m along Tully Falls Road from Ravenshoe and turn into Wooroora Street. The Little Millstream carpark is 2.1km from Tully Falls Road.

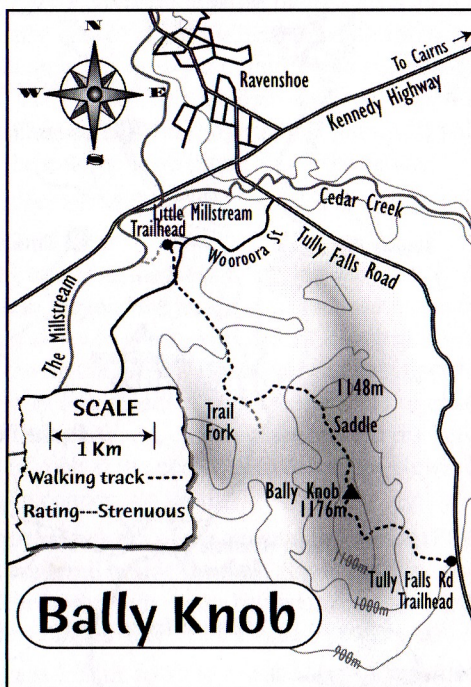
The 5.9km trail rises 260m from the northern trailhead at Little Millstream to Bally Knob, then descends to the southern trailhead near Vine Creek and Pioneer Park on Tully Falls Road.

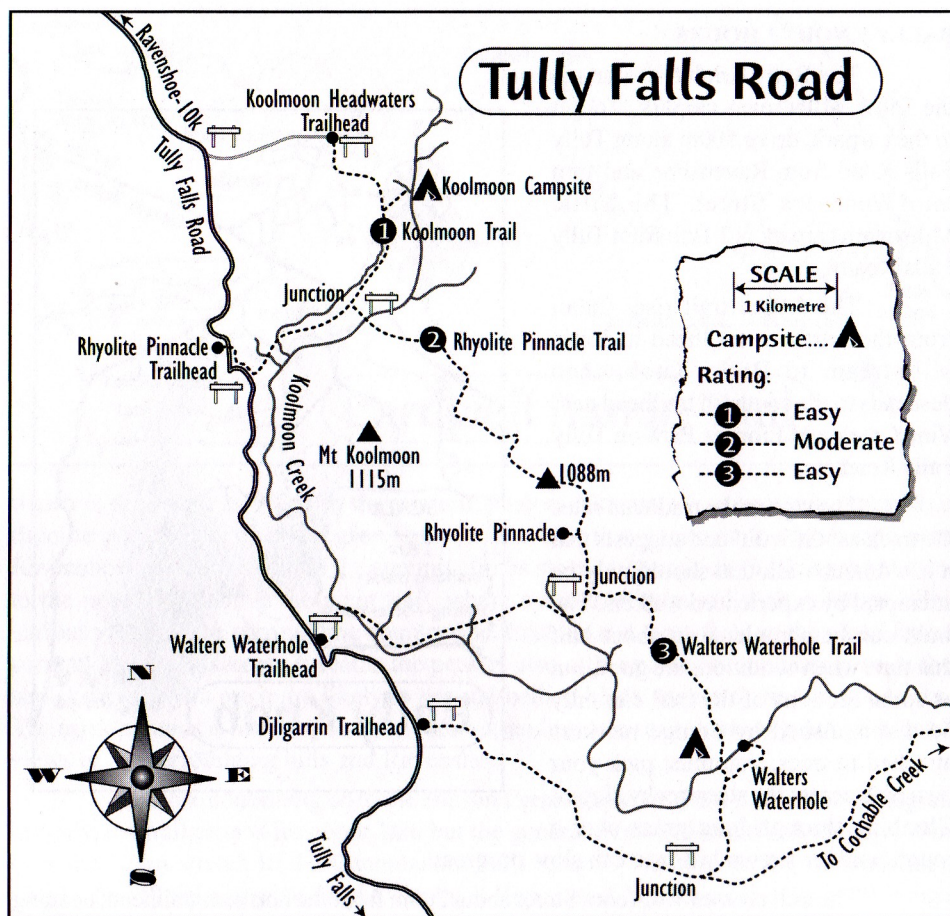
The sign at the trailhead rates the track as 'difficult' and suggests that it is a 4 hour walk that should only be attempted by experienced walkers. The walk can be completed in about half that time when conditions are good, but as some sections of the trail can only be distinguished by orange markers attached to trees, you must pick your own path across the steep rocky slopes. Climbing through long grass over a rough boulder strewn hill face can slow progress.

The trail crosses Wooroora Street about 200m from the northern trailhead, heading along an old timber track that winds through a valley of eucalypt forest. The first 2km is relatively level, but from where the road forks left the valley narrows and the climb begins. The trail ascends the first peak onto a saddle that links a line of peaks to Bally Knob. The timber track ends on the saddle between the last two peaks – Baldy Top and Bally Knob. Trail markers define a steep 700m section over a series of andesite knolls. The andesite rubble rolls beneath your feet as you walk – good hiking boots are essential.

Bally Knob is marked by a stone cairn and a signpost. The views, weather permitting, are excellent. When the knob is shrouded in cloud, it can be uncomfortably wet and cold.

The descent to Tully Falls Road is considerably easier than the northern approach with less boulders and an easier gradient, through open forest and long grass. There is a good view of the Windy Hill wind farm about halfway down the hill. If you are only climbing Bally Knob for the view, the 1.9km southern section of the trail is the easier approach.





KOOLMOON HEADWATERS LOOP - 1½ HOURS ①

The turnoff to the Koolmoon trailhead is 10.2km from Ravenshoe along Tully Falls Road. The trailhead is at the end of a 1.3km dirt track, through a couple of gates that are locked if the trail is closed. The Koolmoon walk is the first of three crescent shaped trails that begin and end on Tully Falls Road. They each share a mutual 'leg', as can be seen on the map.

This is an easy undulating nondescript rainforest walk with three small creek crossings. About 900m from the trailhead, a 300m side track leads down to the Koolmoon campsite. There is running water nearby, but the dark, damp little site will only accommodate a couple of small tents. From the turnoff to the campsite it is about 1.2km further on to the Rhyolite Pinnacle trail junction, and 1.7km from there to Tully Falls Road. The trail exits at the Rhyolite Pinnacle trailhead beside Charmillin Creek, where there is a small picnic area and a deep pool. This is also the southern trailhead of the Wabunga Wayemba track.

RHYOLITE PINNACLE LOOP - 5 HOURS ②

A rhyolite pinnacle is a volcanic 'plug' formed as tectonic movement pushed the dense rock of the oceanic plate beneath the lighter continental crust, melting sectors of the crustal material. This molten rock eventually cooled and solidified beneath the earth's surface, forming volcanic plugs. Over millennia, the overlying continental crust eroded, and a cycle of uplift and erosion exposed the plugs. The resultant outcrops, which are resistant to erosion and inhospitable to plant life, often form lofty vantage points. Rhyolite Pinnacle is no exception, and the walk to the outcrop is an interesting experience.

The Rhyolite Pinnacle trailhead is beside the road at Charmillin Creek, 12.5km from Ravenshoe along Tully Falls Road.

At a signed junction 1.7km from the trailhead, the Koolmoon trail and the Rhyolite Pinnacle trail diverge, 4.4km from the Pinnacle. Beyond the junction the trail passes through densely rainforested rolling terrain, dipping down to creek crossings as it swings toward the Pinnacle. About 1.8km beyond the fork the first rhyolite rocks appear and the vegetation thins. After passing through a 100m section of low spindly scrub the trail dips to cross a creek at the head of some rapids, then re-enters rainforest, crossing one more creek before climbing steadily to a peak. An open area of rock at the peak offers extensive views, but the Pinnacle is still 700m further on across a connecting saddle.

The Pinnacle is a dramatic outcrop that juts out of the surrounding forest. Fluted columns of rock shed from the outcrop lie scattered beside the trail. About halfway along the cliff face, a signed 100m side track climbs through a gap between the rocks to the highest point on the outcrop, where the view ranges over Tully Gorge to the coast.

Beyond the Pinnacle the trail zigzags 1.3km down to a signed junction with the Walters Waterhole trail. The waterhole is 3.1km away and it is 3.7km to Tully Falls Road. The trail crosses an old causeway at Koolmoon Creek 600m before the Walters Waterhole trailhead on Tully Falls Road.

WALTERS WATERHOLE LOOP - 3 HOURS ③

The Walters Waterhole trailhead is 16.1km from Ravenshoe on Tully Falls Road. The loop exits onto the road 1.5km further along, 17.6km from Ravenshoe. If you walk this loop in a clockwise direction starting at the Walters Waterhole trailhead, the trail passes the Rhyolite Pinnacle junction 3.7km from Tully Falls Road. The trail diverts from the old logging road 2.7km further on where it crosses Koolmoon Creek, then reconnects with the road after the crossing.

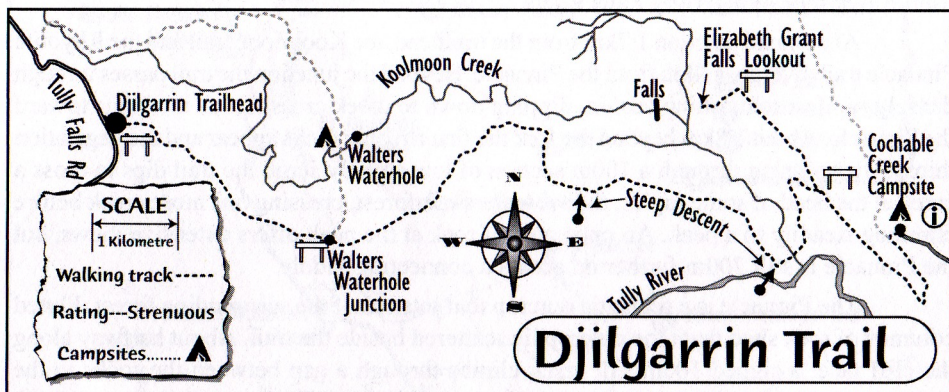
At this point the trail can be a little confusing, as there are a couple of options. On your left, 50m down the road there is an old ruined bridge that once crossed Koolmoon Creek. The bridge is only a few metres from the head of the falls above Walters Waterhole. Hikers camp on a flat spot beside the bridge.

The trail, however, turns right at the junction and heads south along the logging road, passing a signed track about 200m from the bridge. This 600m track diverts from the road to the waterhole. The pool, fed by a picturesque waterfall is confined in a rhyolite basin.

The overflow tumbles across the outcrop, forming two smaller falls as it spills into downstream pools. If the weather is fine and the water level low the rock outcrop at the end of the track is a good place to rest and take it all in.

When you return to the logging road, turn left and follow the road 900m to the next junction. At the junction signs indicate that it is 3.4km to Tully Falls Road, 1.1km from Walters Waterhole (the bridge) and 8.9km to Cochable Creek campsite. The last section of the Walters Waterhole loop follows a logging road back to the Djilgarrin trailhead on Tully Falls Road.

COCHABLE CREEK CAMPSITE TO DJILGARRIN TRAILHEAD - 10 HOURS



At the Djilgarrin trailhead on Tully Falls Road the information board states that the track length is 20.1km. The Cochable Creek campsite is actually 15km from Tully Falls Road.

Although it is usually easier to walk downhill, there can be problems descending the Djilgarrin trail. About 11km from the Tully Falls Road trailhead, after a steep 700m descent from the top of the escarpment, the trail crosses Koolmoon Creek. If the creek is running strongly there is no chance of crossing safely, which leaves you with a very tiring climb back to Tully Falls Road. If you intend walking in this direction make sure you know creek conditions before you start. If you start your walk from the Cochable Creek campsite, the Koolmoon Creek crossing is an easy 4.4km walk, a much shorter return journey if the creek is flooded.

If it is logistically impossible to organise a pick up from Tully Falls Road, a return walk from the Cochable Creek campsite to the base of the escarpment is a good alternative. This 12km return trip accesses a section of rainforest that escaped the loggers' saws.

Starting from the Cochable Creek campsite, the Djilgarrin trail follows the road across the Cochable Creek causeway. The trail passes a steel gate just beyond the crossing and continues on around the contour of the hill onto the Cochable Plateau. On the plateau the road heads northwest on a straight level course toward Elizabeth Grant Falls lookout.

The trail divides at a T-junction, 3.1km from the trailhead where two huge fig-trees arch over the intersection. The signs indicate that Elizabeth Grant Falls is 2.1km further along the old logging road, and Koolmoon Creek is 1.5km along the diverging trail.

From this junction, the trail follows a side road that descends to Koolmoon Creek. The road ends about 100m upstream from the confluence of Koolmoon Creek and the Tully River. The creek crossing is marked at the entrance and exit points. It is sometimes possible to cross without getting wet shoes by using boulders and fallen tree trunks as an aid. If the water level is high the creek is impassable. Fill your water bottles here, there are no more creeks until Walters Waterhole, and it's a steep climb.

Once across the creek, the trail narrows and begins to ascend the spur it will follow to the top of the gorge. The climb is accomplished in two bursts. The first moderately steep climb brings you to a saddle, which leads to a second extremely abrupt climb where the trail rises almost 600m in less than 1km. The lower section of the climb passes through magnificent old growth rainforest, which diminishes with increasing altitude. The steep climb ends on the edge of the Ongera Plateau. At this point you are 3.5km from the junction with the Walters Waterhole trail, and 6.9km from the Djilgarrin trailhead on Tully Falls Road. Overall, you have been climbing for 4km since crossing Koolmoon Creek.

The path across the Ongera Plateau is fairly level and you can move along easily once you get through the tangled roots of the stunted forest on the edge of the plateau. The trail joins an old logging track and follows it to the Walters Waterhole junction, from which point it is an easy 3.4km walk to the Djilgarrin trailhead. If you are doing the extended walk through to the Koolmoon Creek trailhead, Walters Waterhole is the best campsite along the way. The Djilgarrin trail offers a strenuous one day walk.

ELIZABETH GRANT FALLS - 3 TO 4 HOURS RETURN

Elizabeth Grant Falls is a 10.4km return walk from the Cochable Creek campsite in Tully Gorge. Despite the distance, the walk is easy. The trail follows an old forestry road across Cochable Creek causeway and climbs steadily for 1.5km, curving around a spur onto Cochable Plateau, where it levels out. It passes the Djilgarrin junction 3km from the Cochable Creek campsite, remaining level as it leaves the road onto a short path that meanders to the lookout. From the lookout there is a magnificent view of Elizabeth Grant Falls and the Koolmoon escarpment.

CANNABULLEN CREEK TRAIL - 1 DAY

Creek Walk - 3 hours return

The Cannabullen Creek trailhead is at the Cochable Creek campsite in Tully Gorge. Initially, the trail follows an old logging road beside Cochable Creek for 1.4km past a succession of rapids and deep pools. Then it veers right, away from the road, and climbs over a steep ridge, crossing several creeks along the way. It is an abrupt climb that passes amongst spectacular mature rainforest that must have been beyond the loggers' reach.

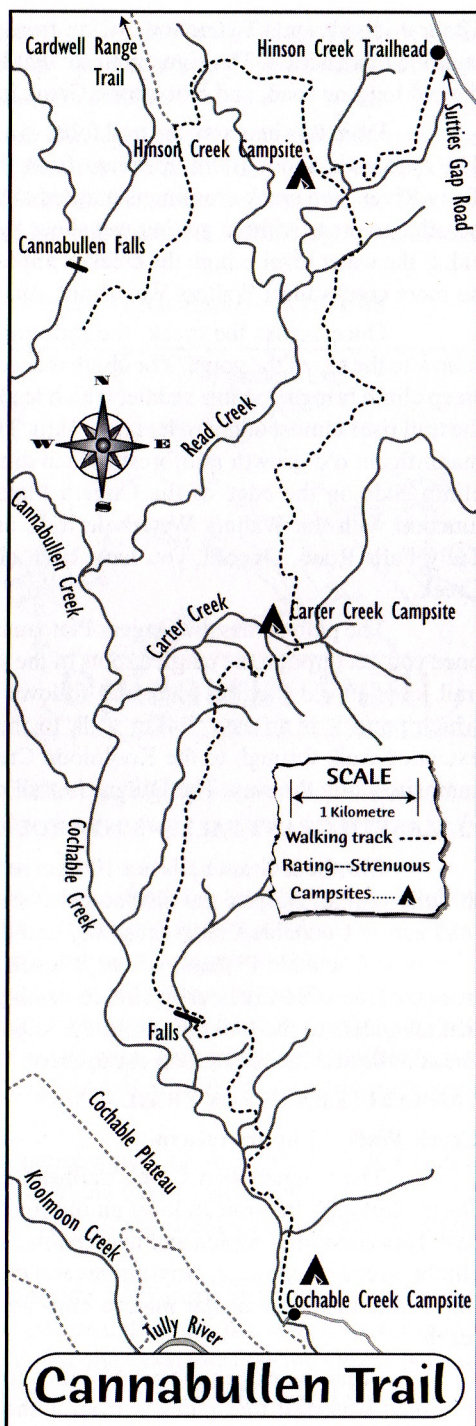
From the ridge the trail descends into a steep gorge, emerging at the base of an unnamed waterfall that plunges from a sheer rock escarpment into a deep pool. This

strenuous 7km return walk is an outstanding wilderness experience.

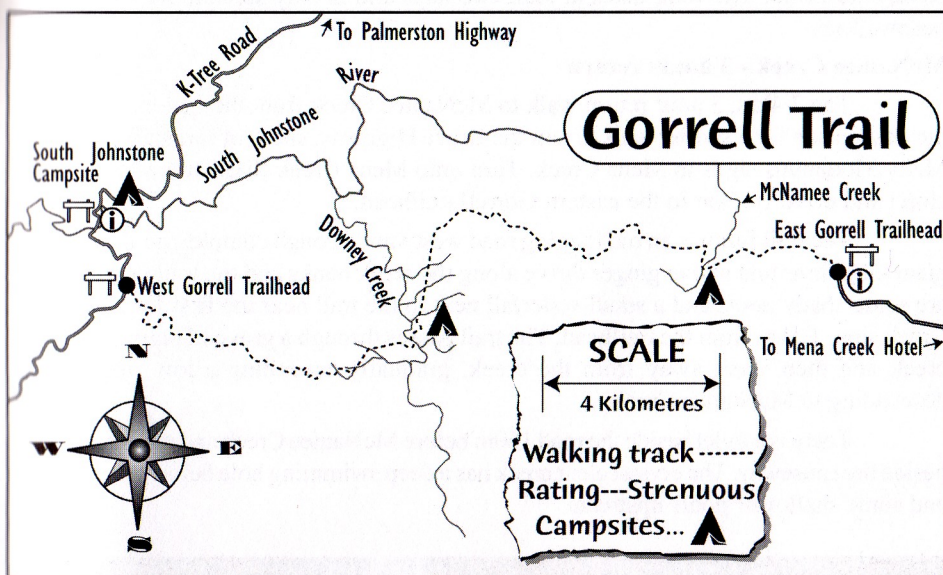
For those continuing through to the Hinson trailhead, the trail climbs the gorge wall onto a basaltic plateau above the pool. The trail follows the rim of the gorge, crossing the creek only a few metres above the waterfall. The creek has worn a channel through the volcanic flow, creating an unusual natural formation. From the plateau the gradient diminishes and the trail follows a logging road along a narrow spur, climbing from the plateau to Carter Creek.

Carter Creek, about half way to the Hinson trailhead, is an official campsite. It is also a good place to stop for lunch and a dip in the creek. Beyond Carter Creek the trail climbs steadily for 2km, crossing several small creeks. This section through to the Hinson Creek campsite and the junction with the Cardwell Range trail is not particularly notable. Extensive erosion of the road embankment along this section has necessitated several steep detours that bypass the landslips. Beyond the Hinson Creek campsite the trail crosses Hinson Creek and follows an old logging track 1.7km to the Hinson Creek trailhead on Sutties Gap Road.

Because they follow the contours of the hills, old logging roads make the walk easier, but the quality of the experience is sometimes compromised by environmental damage. This strenuous 13.7km trail is a day's walk (about 6 hours) for experienced hikers.



GORRELL TRAIL - 2 TO 3 DAYS



The 25.8km Gorrell trail is the longest single section of trail in the Misty Mountains network. The road undulates as it passes through valleys and climbs over saddles, reaching 710m at the highest point. It has no exit points along the way. Despite the distance the walk is not difficult, as it follows old logging roads that are contoured into the hill slopes. If you walk from west to east it is downhill most of the way. Logging roads were not designed to follow scenic routes or provide views of the surrounding landscape, but they do make otherwise inaccessible wilderness areas accessible. Planning is essential to organise transport between the trailheads.

The turnoff to the western trailhead is on the southern side of the Palmerston Highway about halfway between Millaa Millaa and Innisfail. Turn onto K-Tree Road from the signed junction on the highway, and drive along the old logging road for 12.5km to the campsite beside the South Johnstone River, where there is a carpark, toilets, information and tent sites.

The Gorrell trailhead is 2.3km further up the road. The trail heads east into the rainforest and crosses McMillan Creek 1.2km from the trailhead. From the creek the trail undulates as it steadily descends to Downey Creek and the campsite, about 10km from the western trailhead. After crossing the cement causeway at Downey Creek the trail passes a waterfall pool, swings north and heads along the Downey Creek valley for a few kilometres before swinging east again and climbing to a saddle, the highest point on the walk. From here the trail descends and crosses the McNamee Plateau. At the eastern extent of the plateau the trail dips to a cement causeway across McNamee Creek. There is a small flat campsite beside the causeway and a toilet 160m further along the trail.

Beyond the creek the trail climbs for 900m before gradually descending to the eastern trailhead. The walk takes at least two days and is only suitable for experienced bushwalkers.

McNamee Creek - 3 hours return

The 7.4km, 3 hour return walk to McNamee Creek from the eastern trailhead is the best option for a shorter walk. From the Bruce Highway, south of Innisfail, follow the Misty Mountains signs to Mena Creek. Turn onto Mena Creek Road at the Mena Creek Hotel and drive 10.5km to the eastern Gorrell trailhead.

The trail follows an old logging road westward through complex rainforest. Rare giant king ferns and native ginger thrive along the creek banks and the trail verges. There are some shady pools and a small waterfall next to the trail near the first Jardagar/Mena Creek sign, 1.1km from the trailhead. The trail passes through a grove of palms beside the creek and then veers away from the creek, gradually ascending a low ridge before descending to McNamee Creek.

There is a toilet beside the road 160m before McNamee Creek and a small campsite beside the causeway. The crystal clear creek has a deep swimming hole below the causeway and some shallower pools upstream.



Falls - Creek walk, Cannabullet Trail

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